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Brief rules for reading Irish found in printed books, 1571–1863

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Introduction

An interesting and hitherto unexamined feature of printed books in Irish in the period 1571–1871 is the presence in many of them of brief rules for reading Irish. These range in length from a single page or even half a page to longer dissertations of more than a dozen printed pages. They vary in nature from plain alphabets of letters (with or without guides to pronouncing the individual letters) to longer treatises on the sounds conveyed by individual letters and letter-combinations. The aim of this article is to survey these guides in chronological order with a view to providing an account of them and their purpose. As will be demonstrated below, the short manuals examined here are often useful sources for the pronunciation of contemporary Irish and I have attempted to highlight points that may be of interest to historical dialectologists. By their nature, these brief rules also have a place in any history of the grammaticography of Irish.

For the purposes of the present study, I consider only instructions for reading Irish associated with Irish-language texts. By ‘reading’ I mean the ability to associate particular letters and letter-combinations with sounds whether for the purpose of reading aloud or silently. I am not concerned here with full-scale grammars and textbooks the sole aim of which was to enable the learner to acquire Irish, nor with dictionaries,¹ though reference is made to these works below when they have a bearing on shorter printed guides.

This article grows out of and has been written as a companion to *Clóliosta: printing in the Irish language, 1571–1871 – an attempt at narrative bibliography* (Richard Sharpe and Mícheál Hoyne) (forthcoming), a draft of which is now available for download

¹* I gratefully acknowledge here the assistance of Prof. Richard Sharpe in preparing this article. An abbreviated version of this paper was given at the Tionól of the Dublin Institute (November 2018), and I thank all of those who attended for invaluable feedback. My thanks also to the anonymous reader for suggesting some improvements and to my colleague Dr Andrea Palandri for discussing some problems with me. I do, however, make reference to Mícheál Ó Cléirigh’s foreword to his *Sanasán* (1643) below.

(dias.ie/cloliosta, accessed 28 November 2018). In the future it is hoped that reference will be made by number to particular publications treated of in the *Clóliosta* (e.g. ‘Cló 17’, referring to the seventeenth item in the *Clóliosta*), but as the final numbering has not yet been completed, such references are not at present possible. In the present article, I give the year of publication and title as these appear in the *Clóliosta* and the reader is referred for further discussion, the availability and location of copies and bibliographical details on all the items discussed below to the electronic version of the larger work.

Chronological survey

1571 *Aibidil/Aibghitir*

The first book printed in Irish in Ireland, Ó Kearnaigh’s catechism of 1571,² edited with facsimile and notes by Ó Cuív (1990), advertises an introduction to reading Irish in its title: *Aibidil Gaoidheilge, & Caiticiosma*, ‘An Irish Alphabet and Catechism’. Seaán Ó Kearnaigh – this is the spelling of his surname on the title-page – was apparently a native of Leyney in Co. Sligo, born c. 1545. It appears that he had prepared a rough draft of his Catechism by 1563, while in Cambridge. He graduated with a BA in 1565, but it is difficult to reconstruct his career in the six years that elapsed between this and the publication of his book (Ó Cuív 1990: 4–6, 11–12). Ó Kearnaigh would hardly have learnt to read and write Irish in Cambridge; he was presumably taught these skills as a child. The Í Chearnaigh of Leyney were a clerical family – and clerical careers would obviously require a high degree of literacy – and other branches of the Ó Cearnaigh family were certainly involved in scribal activity (Ó Muraíle 1989: 346–7). It is clear from his *Aibidil* that Seaán Ó Kearnaigh had a good grasp of the literary register of Early Modern Irish prose (though curiously the title-page shows a number of lapses) and, as we will see below, that he was acquainted with bardic orthographical and grammatical terminology.

² *Aibidil Gaoidheilge & Caiticiosma .i. Forheadal nó teagasg Criosdaighe, maille lé hairtiogluibh dhairidhe don riaghal Criosduighe, is íngabhtha, dá gach aon da mbé fómánta do reachd Día 7 na bannríoghan sa ríge so, do tairngeamh as Laidean, agus as Gaillbhérta go Gaoidheilg, lá Seaan O Kearnaigh. [. . .] Do buaileadh so á gcló ghaidheilge, a mBaile Atha Clíath, ar chosdas Mhaighisdir Sheón Uiser aldarman, ós chionn an dhroichid, an 20 lá do Juín 1571. Maille lé prímhgiléid na mór-ríoghna, 1571.*

The Alphabet itself (headed *aibghitir* rather than *aibidil* as on the title-page)³ follows on from the author's address to the reader (pp. 3–5) and takes up five whole pages (pp. 6–10). It begins with a list of twenty-two capital letters arranged in two columns, each letter of which is followed by the traditional Irish letter-names and the appropriate lower-case graph.⁴ The letter <i> is indicated by *J. iogha i*. The alphabet follows the standard Latin ordering of letters, commencing with *A. ailm a.*, *B beth b.*, *C. coll c.* etc., rather than the traditional Irish *beithe-luis-nuin* sequence – an overhaul also seen in the unpublished primer prepared by Ó Kearnaigh's Cambridge contemporary Christopher Nugent for Queen Elizabeth perhaps on her visit to Cambridge in 1564 (Benjamin Iveagh Library, Irish Primer, f. 8r) and adopted also in the unpublished but much more wide-ranging Franciscan primer of Irish, *Rudimenta Grammaticae Hibernicae* (Mac Aogáin 1968: 3 and Ó Cuív 1994: 14 n. 44).⁵

Ó Kearnaigh's list of letters is followed by the comment:

X. Y. Ɔ. 7. agus gach titul no gách nod ele, ní litre nadura don ghaidhelg iád. oir ní bhfuilid anmanna oghuimh [*sic*] aca innte: & an tan sgriobthar iad, is brígh á dech bhiós ag x. & brígh u 7 í, bhiós ag u_i. & brígh e, 7 t, bhiós ag gach & 7 díobh so. agus is ionann & laidne. águs 7 na gaoidhelge (pp. 6–7)

'X. Y. Ɔ. 7 and every other abbreviation or contraction are not letters natural to Irish since they have not Oghamic names in it, and when they are written x has the form of *a deich* [i.e. <x> represents the numeral 'ten'], and u_i (y) has the force of (digraph) *ui*, and every & (and) 7 among them has the force of *e* and *t* [i.e. *et*], and & of Latin [writing] is the same as 7 of Irish (writing).' (Ó Cuív 1990: 161)

Though unexplained by Ó Kearnaigh, the Tironian note <ɔ> is a common symbol in Irish manuscripts most often used to represent the word or syllable *con*.

On p. 7, the alphabet is subdivided into vowels and consonants; the former are further subdivided into broad and slender, the latter into the six consonant-classes of bardic didactic

³ Here *aibghitir* and *aibidil* have the primary sense 'alphabet', though the extended sense 'primer' is also appropriate. Bedell's 1631 small catechism uses the word in the latter sense: *The A. B. C. or the Institution of a Christian. Aibgitir .i. Theaguisg cheudtosugheadh an Chriostaide. Dublin: Printed by the Company of Stationers, 1631.*

⁴ For the letter-names in Irish, see McManus 1988.

⁵ Unlike Ó Kearnaigh the author of the *Rudimenta* does not include *K. chollailm*, *Q. ceart* and *Z. straiph*.

texts.⁶ For the consonant-classes, it is necessary to introduce lenited forms also in addition to the bare letters of the alphabet, so that the lists presented are not strictly-speaking simply a subdivision of the alphabet: the first consonant-class given (*na seáhd gcónsoin édtroma* ‘the seven light consonants’), for example, consists of *dh. gh. mh. bh. r. l. n.*; unlenited <d>, <g>, <m> and appear again in their respective consonant-classes. Several letters from Ó Kearnaigh’s alphabet are missing from this subdivision: <q> finds no place nor does <z> or <k>, though <k> is the subject of some comment (p. 8). Ó Kearnaigh declares that, while it is not used to designate vowels or consonants (*ní goirthear guthaighí na consoin de*), it is employed for the syllable *ca* (*cuirthear anionad .c,a, hé go meních*). As Ó Cuív notes (1990: 161) this does not account for the use of <k> in the author’s surname on the title-page. In defence of Ó Kearnaigh it could be said that his guide was intended as a more general introduction to the contemporary spelling of Irish, in which <k> is hardly ever used simply as a substitute for <c>.⁷

<h> is treated at some length: the use of the punctum (*pongc*) to indicate lenition is noted and the fact that the addition of a <h> to certain consonants changes their sound value. Ó Kearnaigh’s discussion of this topic will be discussed in more detail below. It is also noted that only consonants take a punctum and that not all consonants do: <l>, <n> and <r> do not.⁸ Ó Kearnaigh is dealing here with orthographical lenition and the use of the punctum in particular; his remarks cannot be taken to mean that he did not recognise a phonetic distinction between lenited and unlenited *l*, *n* and *r*.

On p. 8 Ó Kearnaigh turns to the vocalic digraphs. These he terms *diptongoin* (‘diphthongs’) or *coimhcheanguil* (‘combinations’). The former is obviously a loanword, but it is not known from any earlier source, while *coimhcheangal* is similarly unparalleled in any

⁶ For these consonant-classes and their phonetic basis, see Ó Cuív 1966.

⁷ In subliterate lapidary inscriptions, we sometimes find <k> used for <c>, most likely under the influence of English: approximately seventy years before the publication of Ó Kearnaigh’s book, for example, the lapidary ‘Matha O Cogli’ rendered the surname Ó Ceallaigh as ‘O Keallaid’ in a black-letter Irish-language inscription on a tomb in Abbeyknockmoy, Co. Galway (Macalister 1949: 8). <k> is also found in Irish names in Latin contexts, as in the spelling ‘Iohs OKarbri’ on a shrine in Clones (Macalister 1949: 127). It is, of course, common also in English renderings of Irish names (such as ‘Kearney’). It may be that ‘Ó Kearnaigh’ was the author’s normal spelling of his name and that this use of <k> was a more widespread orthographical practice common among persons who were functionally literate in Irish (clerics and stonemasons, for instance) but not involved in formal, high-status scribal activity.

⁸ <r> is in fact omitted on p. 7 but instructions for its insertion are given in a corrigendum on p. 55.

other source, the normal native term for digraph (and diphthong) being *deafhoghar* (Ó Cuív 1990: 161). Ó Kernaigh's treatment of these digraphs – which are divided into five groups with traditional designations – has been discussed in detail by Ó Cuív in his notes on this passage. Particularly interesting is his treatment of <áé>, which is illustrated by the example *faé ó chanamhuin*. This must be the 3 sing. masc. prepositional pronoun from *fá* 'under', which is normally *fa(o)í* in Early Modern Irish (see *BST* 193.23 for the conjugated forms of the preposition). The term *canamhain* is used in bardic didactic literature as a label for forms which are regarded as correct but are in some way anomalous. Ó Kernaigh would appear to have been aware of some bardic text no longer known in which *faé* was given a variant form *faoí*.⁹ Ó Kernaigh does not explain the term *canamhain*.

Perhaps for the want of convenient terms to express stress distinctions Ó Kernaigh runs into some trouble in his attempt to give an account of arbitrary variation in the use of vowel-graphs in unstressed syllables:

Téd gnéthe dona diptongaidhibh so go menic ar son a chéle a bhfoclaibh aírighthe mar tá ai, oi, ui. 7 mar an gcedna ted cuid dona guthuighibh ar son a chéle mar tá a. o. u. 7 .e. í. (p. 10)

‘Forms of these digraphs frequently serve for one another in certain words, namely *ai*, *oi*, *ui*, and likewise some of the vowels serve for one another, namely *a*, *o*, *u* and *i*, *e*.’

This is an attempt to describe the kind of variation seen, for example, in the spelling of the unstressed syllable of the adjective *ionraic* (which in this period could be written also *ionruic* and less commonly *ionroic*) or the noun *díoghaltas* (which could also have been written with *-u-* or *-o-* for *-a-* in the second and third syllables) or the prepositional pronoun *fúithe* (which

⁹ Presumably *faé* represents [fe:] here, though it should be noted that the placement of length-marks in early printed literature in Irish is unreliable. Today the normal pronunciation of the simple preposition *faoi* (earlier *fá*) and the 3 sing. masc. prepositional pronoun *faoi* in Munster Irish is generally [f'e:] (and in Clare [fe:] is recorded) (*SnaG* vi §6.10). Cf. also the Munster pronunciation of *caoi* and *naoi* (with non-palatal initials). The variation in the modern pronunciation of *faoi*, *caoi* and *naoi* is to be connected with the variation between *aoí* and *áe* in some words in Early Modern Irish, e.g. gen. sing. *laoí* and *lái*. The <áe> of the latter form (today found in all dialects and normally spelt without a length-mark) is now pronounced [e:], though the evidence of Classical Modern Irish poetry and didactic literature points to <áe> (also sometimes <ái>) as having the pronunciation [a:ⁱ], i.e. a long vowel followed by a palatal glide (hence my placement of the length-mark in CModIr *lái*), the long equivalent of <ai> [a:ⁱ] in words like *caith* (Hoyne 2017: 174–8). It is unclear when precisely [a:ⁱ] was fronted to [e:] in these words.

could also be written -i). The lack of any explicit reference to stress or any examples leaves this formulation too vague to be of much use on its own, however.

The Alphabet concludes with what we might describe as a disclaimer:

... bíoth a fhios agud a léghtheóir go bhfuil iómarcruigh do riághlachuibh 7
d'aícheapduibh ar gach aon chuid fó leth don aibghíder so: 7 arna titluibh bhíos innte
ann sa liter láimhe. & gebé lé nab áil lórgaireachd do dhenamh orrtha so nó a bhfios
d'fhághbhail, fágghbhadh fógghluim óna fileaghuibh. oír is lé na n-ealádhain bheanas
sin do thrachdadh go hínntleachdach eólusách: & ní leamsa.

‘Know, O reader, that there are more rules and precepts concerning every single individual part of this alphabet and about the abbreviations that occur in it in hand-written form; and whoever wishes to investigate these or to find out about them, let him get instruction from the poets, for it is proper to their craft to explicate those things intelligently and knowledgeable and not to mine.’¹⁰

The endorsement of the bardic schools may seem rather surprising at first sight, but the sympathy of the protestant regime with some aspects of the work of the bardic order is not without parallel. Perhaps in preparation for the publication of Ó Kearnaigh’s book, a bardic religious poem attributed to the Observantine Franciscan Pilib Bocht Ó hUiginn (†1487), *Tuar feirge foighide Dé*, had been printed on a broadsheet (reproduced in Ó Cuív 1990). It was speculated earlier (fn. 7) that Ó Kearnaigh’s use of <k> might suggest that his own literacy in Irish was acquired outside of the more formal, literary milieu of the contemporary Irish-language literati. It is regrettably unknowable on the basis of extant records how much the *Aibghitir* reflects Ó Kearnaigh’s own education and to what extent he sought out expert advice from bardic poets in preparing this work.

Ó Cuív’s edition of the *Aibidil Gaoidheilge & Caiticiosma* is an important work of scholarship furnished with ample philological notes. Some basic question about the book itself are not addressed in the editor’s introduction, however, including what readership Ó Kearnaigh had in mind when he produced this work, whether it was fit for this readership, and whether he succeeded in reaching them. On these questions an analysis of the

¹⁰ The translation ‘and not to mine’ is to be preferred to the more literal ‘and not to me’. For the brachylogy here, see Mac Cana 1966: 112 n. 2.

introductory remarks on Irish orthography can shed some light. Describing the *Aibghitir*, Ó Cuív (1990: 13) writes:

This short section, which to some extent reflects the teaching of the bardic schools of the sixteenth century as seen in the bardic linguistic tracts, was apparently intended to assist the reader unfamiliar with the letters and sounds of the Irish language.

If this was really Ó Kearnaigh's intention in this section, the *Aibghitir* must be judged an abject failure: how could 'the **reader** unfamiliar with the letters and sounds of the Irish language' hope to **read** Ó Kearnaigh's introduction and, if 'the letters and sounds of the Irish language' posed a challenge to him, what would he make of unexplained technical terminology like *ogham* or *canamhain*?

Ó Kearnaigh's book was certainly targeted at readers whose mother-tongue was Irish – in his epistle to the reader (p. 4) he refers to Irish as the reader's native language (*ann do theangaidh nádúra*) – but there is no reason to believe that Ó Kearnaigh harboured the unrealistic expectation that an illiterate person might make his way without further instruction through this written guide to reading Irish. One will note also that pronunciation is not treated in any meaningful way: how would such a reader be expected to sound out <ao> or <aoi>, for example, the values of which are hardly obvious to the uninitiated? It would be better therefore to regard the *Aibghitir* as a guide to **teaching** literacy in Irish rather than as an independent guide to **acquiring** literacy in Irish, a guide which perforce assumed some degree of literacy on the part of the user. But who were these users? Ó Kearnaigh's apologia at the conclusion of the *Aibghitir* indicates that he did not expect them to have undergone the rigorous education of a bardic poet, but it is clear from the very same apologia – even making allowance for the ostentatious humility normal in addresses to the reader in printed works of this period – that Ó Kearnaigh too made no claim to such specialist training. The catechism itself is described as

... anní is cóir dá gach leánb d'fógluim ní is taósga na dhaíngneochar nó mar a derthear go coidcheann chuirfíghthear [f]ó laimh easbuig hé, ann a gcuireann in maighister an chesd, 7 ann a fhreagrann in fóghluinntighe hé. (p. 11)¹¹

¹¹ Note that the *f* of *fhreagrann* is dotted in the printed book; the dotted *f* can represent both *fh* and *bhf*. This is discussed below (###).

‘... that which every child should learn before he is confirmed or, as is commonly said, before he is put under a bishop’s hand, in which the master asks the question and in which the learner answers him.’

As the catechism is to be used by a master to teach the infant learner, the *Aibghitir* was presumably designed with the same procedure and the same pedagogical context in mind.

That Ó Kearnaigh’s Catechism with its introduction to reading Irish should have been chosen as the first output of protestant printing in Irish on Irish soil requires some explanation. Elizabeth I had financed the production of an Irish font with a view to publishing the New Testament and, as nothing had appeared in the interim, she was threatening to demand re-payment in 1567 (Hamilton 1860: 356). It could not be claimed that Ó Kearnaigh’s Catechism was a substitute for an Irish Bible, but it might have sufficed to satisfy the queen that the protestant cause was being furthered in print in the Irish language. A more specific historical context for the publication of Ó Kearnaigh’s Catechism has not, to my knowledge, been suggested before: given the nature of the Catechism and the accompanying guide to reading Irish, it may not be coincidental that Ó Kearnaigh’s work should be published one year after the Dublin parliament passed a law to establish free diocesan schools in Ireland. If there is indeed a connection between this legislation and the appearance of Ó Kearnaigh’s book, the users he had in mind were most likely schoolmasters. The act itself (12 Eliz. c. 1 ‘An Acte for the ereccion of free Schooles’) states that the schoolmaster was to be an Englishman or ‘of the Englyshe birth of this realme’.¹² One can doubt how feasible this provision really was, but in any event it is well known that many of English extraction were Irish-speakers in this time even in the heart of the Pale. We might note here also that while Ó Kearnaigh is known to have made a rough translation of the Catechism by 1563 while a student in Cambridge, the Alphabet may have been written at a later stage (Ó Cuív 1990: 11–12), something which might suggest he was responding to more recent developments by appending an Irish primer.

The *Aibghitir* was a pioneering work. It has no known antecedent in Irish: though Ó Kearnaigh drew on bardic teaching, there is no extant introductory work of similar scope and

¹² I am citing from f. 176 of the 1572 edition of ‘the statutes from the tenth year of king Henrie the sixt, to the xiiii. yere of our moste gracious and soueraygne lady Queene Elyzabeth’ (available at EEBO). Cf. *The Statutes at Large, passed in the Parliaments held in Ireland [...]* (Dublin, 1786), p.361 (available on Google Books). For the torturous progress of the bill, see Treadwell 1966–7: 59, 63, 74, 76, 85. This act was repealed by the Oireachtas in the Statute Law Revision (Pre-Union Irish Statutes) Act 1962.

detail which could have served as a template. Conversant in and largely content with the inherited native framework for describing Irish orthography, it seems that Ó Kernaigh was confident enough to accept innovations in the ordering of the alphabet and in terminology. The importation of the traditional Latin ordering of the letters and of some foreign terms like ‘diphthong’ chime with the international outlook expressed several times in the *Aibghitir*: *Roinntear aibghitir na gaoidhelge mar gach aibidil ele, aghón ánn dá ghné* (p. 7), ‘The Irish alphabet is divided like every other alphabet, namely, into two types [vowels and consonants]’; *Mar atá dioptóngón ag an ngreagach 7 ág in laidnoír, atád coimhcheanguil ag an ngaoidhelg* (p. 8), ‘As the Greek scholar and the Latinist have a “diphthong”, so the Irish language has “combinations” ’; ... *dá gach aón lé nab férde in teanguidh ghóidhelge do chur ann a cló dhíleas fén mar tá gach teanguidh ele sa chríosduigheachd* (p. 10), ‘for everyone who would benefit from the Irish language being cast in its own proper type like every other language in Christendom’.

His apologia makes clear that Ó Kernaigh was aware that the *Aibghitir* could not suffice as a complete manual for reading Irish and alerts users of the book to this fact. If his introduction to reading Irish was insufficient by itself as a key to real competency in reading Irish, it is because it was never intended to be used without the aid of a teacher. Ó Cuív (1991: 161) appears to assume that Ó Kernaigh intended his *Aibghitir* to be an introduction only to the spelling of his own book and is surprised that he should mention the *con*-symbol given that it does not occur anywhere else in the book, but the inclusion of the *con*-symbol, as well as the letter <z> (which does not occur elsewhere in the book, so far as I have noticed) or <k> (which only occurs on the title-page in the author’s surname), may suggest not so much a lack of organisation on Ó Kernaigh’s part as an ambition to provide as ample an introduction to reading Irish as practicable on this occasion.

We have no evidence for contemporary reception of Ó Kernaigh’s *Aibghitir* or whether it ever proved of use. It was clearly an influence on Stapleton (see below), who, as will be demonstrated below, could not match Ó Kernaigh’s understanding of native grammatical terminology. The lack of a single manuscript copy made from the edition itself suggests that the book did not find a wide readership. This is to be viewed within the context of the general failure of the Reformation in Ireland, however, and is not necessarily a reflection on Ó Kernaigh’s effort either as a translator-catechist or as an explicator of Irish orthography. As for the guide, it must be remembered that it was designed for the classroom and not for a scribal milieu.

Theobald Stapleton's bilingual catechism printed in Brussels in 1639¹³ – the Irish and Latin are presented in parallel columns – represented a major departure in Irish printing. Its importance is reflected in the decision of the Irish Manuscripts Commission to produce a facsimile in 1945. Stapleton was a catholic priest of Cashel archdiocese who after twelve years of ministry in Ireland returned to the continent and wrote his catechism, so he informs us in its preface, to supply a want he had observed during his stay. He designed it for use in teaching the young (Ryan 2013: 172–8). Presumably this would take place primarily in the catholic schools that operated in Ireland despite the Established Church or in the family home.

Neither the protestant backers of printing in Irish nor the Franciscans in Louvain had presumed to tamper much with the orthographical system of Irish and they had all adhered to a relatively high-register literary idiom of Early Modern Irish.¹⁴ In typography, orthography and in the use of ligatures and common abbreviations Irish-language printed books produced by the Established Church in Ireland and the Franciscans in Louvain would not have appeared particularly exotic to those acquainted with the living scribal tradition. Stapleton's catechism is not merely the first Irish book to be produced in roman type, it also represents a conscious – albeit tentative and inconsistent – effort to simplify Irish orthography, which anticipates in some respects the spelling 'reform' movements of the twentieth century. On the title-page one finds, for example, *criostuí* for the more traditional *críostaidhe*, *arna fhoillsuí* [= *fhoillsiú*] for *arna bhfoil(l)siughadh*, *chomhrá* for gen. *chomhrádha*. Manuscript abbreviations are done away with and an effort is made to represent Irish more phonetically, as the author explains in the preface (p. [xvi]):

... gan fireacha, & fo[s]¹⁵ gan achamareacht ar bith son sgribhinn, gidheagh, ní do reir churtha sios & ortographi na Gaoilaga gu ró chinnte ach amhain mar chantar &

¹³ *Catechismus, seu Doctrina Christiana Latino-Hibernica, per modum dialogi, inter magistrum et discipulum. Explicata per R. D. Theobaldum Stapletonium, Sacerdotem Hibernum. Post indicem apposita est methodus facilis legendi linguam Hibernicam, cum charactere Romano. Catechismus. Adhon, an Teagasc Criostuí, iar na fhoillsuí [sic] à Ladin & à Ngaoilaig, ar modh chomhrá idir Magistir & Disciubúl. Maile re Teaboid Gállduf, sagart Erennach. Agus déis an chláir modh vras leighte na teangan Ghaoilaige à leitreacha Romhanacha. Bruxellis: Typis Huberti Anthonii Velpii, sub Aquila aurea iuxta Palatium, 1639. Permissu superiorum.*

¹⁴ For the language of the Louvain press, see Ó hUiginn 2013.

¹⁵ In support of reading *fo[s]* cf. the Latin *sine vllis abbreviationibus aut figuris*.

labharthar na briartha go coitchiann, & as do aontoisc do rinnas so, ionnas go mo follas do gach aoin modh leite na teangan Ghaoilaige fá már do gheabhair foillsethe tar eis an chláir.

‘... without symbols, and further without any abbreviation in the writing; moreover most certainly not according to the manner of writing and the orthography of Irish except as the words are generally uttered and spoken; and it is deliberately that I did this, so that the manner of reading the Irish language might be clear to all, as you will find explained after the list of contents.’¹⁶

This refers to a two-page guide to reading headed *Modus perutilis legendi linguam Hibernicam* and *Modh ró uras na teanghan Ghaoilaige do leagh* at the end of the book, which will be discussed in more detail here.

It is easy to over-estimate the extent to which Stapleton was an innovator in orthography. It will be noted that in the passage cited above he is speaking mainly of abbreviations. Like Ó Kearnaigh, he was not the scion of a family associated with traditional learning in Irish. We do not know how he came to learn to read and write the language, but it is highly unlikely it was in the same milieu as the traditional native learned families. Just as Ó Kearnaigh’s use of <k> in his surname finds parallels in subliterate inscriptions in Irish, so too does Stapleton’s more phonetic spelling. See, for example, ‘ri’ for dat. *rígh*, and ‘ichonchuir’ for *Í Chonchobhair* on the Abbeyknockmoy inscription mentioned above (fn. 7), and ‘se bliana dec’ (for *bliadhna*) on an early sixteenth-century inscription from Fenagh (Macalister 1949: 9). While Stapleton is the first to bring such spelling practices into print – and he did indeed do so deliberately and not apparently for want of knowledge –, he is not the great innovator he might appear to be at first glance.

The guide (pp. [171–2]) is made up of nineteen short numbered paragraphs and begins with the statement that the letters of Irishmen and Latinists are the same (*Ionann litreacha dona Herenachuibh, & dona Lainneoribh*), with the exception of <k> and <q>, for which <c> does service, and <x>, <y> and <z>, which are not found in Irish (at least by Stapleton’s time). In the second paragraph we are informed that every letter must be given its value in Irish – i.e. letters are not silent – though he announces that exceptions will be introduced later. We are also told that the letters are then divided into vowels and consonants. The third

¹⁶ Stapleton does allow himself some minor abbreviations using numerals, such as *an 2.* for *an dara*. An occasional *n*-stroke is also met with. The ampersand is frequently used, as is *.i.*

paragraph concerns vowels: *As ionann gothí na lainne & iád .i. a.e.i.o.u. ata cuid aco tróm .i. a.o.u. & cuid ele eadrom adhon e.i.*, ‘These are identical with the vowels of Latin, i.e. *a, e, i, o, u*; some of them are heavy [Lat. *crassæ*], i.e. *a, o, u*; and some of them are light [Lat. *tenues*], i.e. *e, i*’. From these ‘diphthongs’ (*dafhouruigh*) and ‘triphthongs’ (*trifhouruigh*) are formed. I have no other example of the terms *trom* and *éadtrom* being used to mean ‘broad’ and ‘slender’. The terms *leathan* and *caol* are used in the next paragraph to refer to vowel-length; there twelve ‘diphthongs’ are divided into six – <ae>, <ao>, <eo>, <eu>, <ia> and <iu> – that are always long (*do shiór leathan*) and six – <ai>, <oi>, <ua> (!), <ui>, <ea> and <ei> – that can be both long and short (*bid ar varibh leatha, & ar varibh cáol*). The examples given after <ua> in the Irish column are *crúa, cual*, but I do not know how *cual* could be said to have a short diphthong: perhaps Stapleton meant that <ua> is sometimes explicitly marked long (with a length-mark) and sometimes not, but, if this is the case, he needlessly muddies the waters.¹⁷ In the Latin, the point is conveyed differently: there the first series (the ‘diphthongs’ that are always long) is subject of the 3 pl. passive present indicative of *produco* (here ‘lengthen, draw out’). Paragraph 5 deals with ‘triphthongs’ (<aói>, <eói>, <úai>, <iái> and <iúi>) and paragraph 6 advises that these ‘diphthongs’ and ‘triphthongs’ do not have hiatus (*Caól, & ní ca-ol*, i.e. monosyllabic *caol* is not to be pronounced *caöl*).¹⁸ If Ó Kearnagh is responsible for coining the term *coimhcheangal* in the sense ‘diphthong’, one wonders if he did so precisely to avoid such a misunderstanding.

The pronunciation of mutated letters in initial position is treated in paragraph 8: *An trath theanguid dha chonnsain, nó ní somho à ttús fhocail gan guthigh do theacht atartha, as ag an cced chonnsain bhiós brigh: leis an Bpaidir, ar an mbaidi, &c.*, ‘When two consonants or more come together in the beginning of a word without a vowel coming between them, it is the first vowel that has force: *leis an bpaidir, ar an mbaidi*’. This is a good attempt to obviate one of the peculiar difficulties of Irish orthography, but it does not take account of consonant clusters like *sc, st, sp* etc.

Paragraph eight concerns ‘this symbol *h*’ (*an fhighir so h*):

An fhighir so h. bioth nach litir í, amh, as mór à brigh & à comhachta ar na connsanuibh ele, ór nil son aibidil uile aon chonnsain nach semhghean, no nach malartúigheann, no nach baineann à brigh ar modh eigin Dí; ór semhigheann na [sic]

¹⁷ The Latin of this paragraph (as elsewhere) has Latin rather than Irish examples.

¹⁸ In the Latin, the examples of *coelum* and *aurum* are given.

chonnasain gharabh, eadromain an tróm, & cruaidhean an bog: leith à muith dhona tri chonsain so l, n, r, nach foil cur aici ortha, amh chuigi so as à níáigh na connsoin churthar í do shiór, mar as léir an so, ‘modh’, ‘bocht’, & c.

‘This symbol *h*, though it is not a letter, nonetheless its force and its power over the other consonants is great, for there is not one consonant in the alphabet that it does not smooth or alter or from which it does not take its force in some way; for it smoothes the rough consonant, lightens the heavy and hardens the soft, except for these three consonants (*l, n, r*) that it cannot be put on; moreover, further to this it is after the consonants that it is always put, as is clear from this, *modh, bocht*, etc.’ (pp. 171–2)

It is difficult to make much sense of Stapleton’s treatment of lenition. His wording is remarkably similar to Ó Kearnagh’s discussion of the same topic in his *Aibghitir* (see the discussion above and the following citation), which Stapleton has garbled, deforming a nuanced discussion of phonetic changes brought about by lenition into a vague paean to the powers of lenition.

H. is mór a bhrígh a ngaidhelg, 7 do ní púnc mar so ∴ á ionadh, an tan chuirtheas ós cíonn na litre hé. & os chionn choda dona cónsonuibh amháin chuirtheas hé ’na phongc: 7 is iad so na litre nach gabhann hé. l. n. [r.] 7 beanuidh sé a mbrígh dhileas dona lítribh ar a dtéd, án mhéd go ngárbhuigheand sé consain bhog, 7 go n-edtromaogheand sé consain chruáidh, 7 go sémhigheann consain teand. (p. 8)

‘*H*, its force is great in Irish and a punctum like this · takes its place when it is put over a letter. And it is only over some of the consonants that it is put, and these are the letters that do not take it: *l, n* and *r*. And it deprives the letter over which it is put of its proper force, in that it makes a soft consonant [*p, t* and *c*] rough [*ph, th* and *ch*], a hard consonant [*b, d* and *g*] light [*bh, dh* and *gh*] and it lenites a firm consonant [*m*].’

Ó Kearnagh had earlier introduced the consonant classes to which he refers in his treatment; Stapleton has not and clearly does not grasp that terms such as ‘light’ and ‘hard’ are employed in a technical sense by Ó Kearnagh, though the consonants are clearly arranged in their respective classes in a table in the *Aibghitir*. Nonetheless the verbal similarity is such that there can be no doubt about Stapleton’s starting point.

Paragraphs 9–14 deal with the pronunciation of lenited letters and the lack of (orthographical) lenition on <l>, <n> and <r>. Interestingly (and rather confusingly),

Stapleton allows two values to <fh>, namely zero and /v/ (when it represents nasalised <f>): *Tuig gur truime an guith bhiós ag mh, na ag bh, & fh, & ar voribh ní bhionn brigh ar bhith ag fh*, ‘Understand that the sound that *mh* has is broader [or ‘heavier’] than *bh* and *fh*, and sometimes *fh* has no value at all’.¹⁹ (The statement that <mh> is ‘broader’ may be intended to indicate that it is more nasal in realisation than <bh>.) Paragraphs 15–16 gives the pronunciation of initial <tt> as /d/ and <cc> as /g/, while Paragraph 17 discusses the loss of medial and final *gh* and *dh* in words like *tighearna*, which is given the phonetic spelling *tiarna*. Paragraph 18 deals with initial vocalic <v> which is said to always be pronounced separately (*co haonracanach*) from a following vowel, so that *vaidh* is to be pronounced, according to Stapleton, as *v-aidh* and *vile* as *v-ile*. Earlier the hyphen was used in this manner to indicate hiatus. The first example (*v-aidh*) might suggest an attempt to explain that <ua> is to be pronounced as a diphthong /uə/ (though one wonders then why this is not said of other true diphthongs), but it is difficult to see how <ui> could ever be pronounced in a similar fashion.

The final paragraph concerns the ampersand and the symbol .i.

In his preface, Stapleton is dismissive of the native learned classes, whom he castigates for obscuring the Irish language and contributing to its decline (p. [xv]; translated in Ó hUiginn 2013: 103). As his garbled discussion of lenition makes clear, he had not undergone much higher training in the explication of Irish grammar. This impression is confirmed by his apparently novel use of terms such as *leathan*, *caol*, *trom* and *éadrom*. His obvious lack of serious formal training in the language makes him an unreliable guide and, in

¹⁹ The use of a punctum as a mark of nasalisation as well as lenition is well attested in Irish manuscripts (see Hoyne 2018: 121) and, indeed, has already been met with in a citation from Ó Kearnaigh (see ### above). The lenition of initial *f* is exceptional vis-à-vis other instances of initial lenition in Irish in that the consonant is lenited out of existence. The orthographical device of using a lenition-marker to express nasalisation may have been suggested by the likes of *b > bh*, in which the resultant lenited consonant is more voiced than the radical. (Indeed, if phoneticians are correct that, contrary to accepted wisdom, Irish does not in fact have a set of contrasting voiced and voiceless plosives but that the contrast is between voiceless-aspirated and voiceless-unaspirated (see, for example, Bennett et al 2017: 3), then the lenition of *b* involves not an intensification of voicing but simple voicing.) Note also that nasalisation of *f* was not reliably indicated in Irish manuscripts until the fifteenth century, but in certain common phrases a dotted *f* might have been interpreted as a nasalised *f*. In *ní fúil* etc., later spelling confirm that besides the regular *ní fhúil* there was also a common variant *ní bhfúil* in Early Modern Irish, the nasalisation being most likely due to a petrified masculine infixed pronoun (see M’Caughey 1968 and cf. O’Rahilly 1932: 44–5). Cf. also *ní bhfuair* and *ní bhfuighe*. Such words might have encouraged a re-analysis of the punctum over initial *f* as a marker of nasalisation.

at least one instance, Stapleton's pronouncements seem to be at odds with our understanding of contemporary Irish phonology.

The Irish version of this short manual could not have been of much use as a guide to reading Irish on its own, but Stapleton was writing for an audience who had a good command of Latin. It was argued above that Ó Kearnaigh's *Aibghitir* might have been used as a template to teach children Irish. It seems unlikely that Stapleton's *Modus perutilis* was conceived with the same object in mind. Its placement – at the very end of the book, after the list of contents – suggests that it was not designed as part of a catechumen's initiation but rather that it was for the exclusive benefit of the user of the book. But unlike Ó Kearnaigh's *Aibghitir*, which could not have been used for self-instruction in literacy in Irish, the Latin portion of Stapleton's *Modus perutilis* might well have helped Irish-speakers illiterate in Irish but literate in Latin to acquire reading competency in their native language by self-instruction. Presumably the intended users are the parish priests (*ar na sagairtaibh poreiste*), the godparents (*ar na Cairdeachas Criost*), fathers (*ar na Haitreachaibh nadurtha*), confessors (*ar na Haithrieachaibh faoisidine*) and preachers (*ar na seanamontaithe*) to whom appeal is made in the preface (p. [xiii]), but unsurprisingly he places considerable emphasis on the role of clerics and schoolmasters in catechising (pp. [viii–ix, xi]). It is unlikely that such readers could have made much headway in the Irish on their own without considerable effort or further instruction, for Stapleton's guide is not detailed or reliable enough nor is his orthographical system consistent or phonetic enough to allow for the straight-forward sounding-out of the words by a hitherto illiterate native speaker. Its more phonetic orthographical system also meant that the catechism is dialect-specific, which might have narrowed its potential readership.

1643 Ó Cléirigh

Though not a free-standing guide to orthography and reading Irish within a larger work like Ó Kearnaigh's *Aibghitir* or Stapleton's *Modus perutilis*, brief mention will nonetheless be made here of the advice given to 'the young and ignorant' (*ag an áos óg agus ag an áos ainbfis*) who wish to read old books (*na seinleabhair*) in the epistle to the reader printed at the beginning of Brother Míchéal Ó Cléirigh's *Foclóir na Sanasán Nua* published in Louvain in 1643.²⁰ Ó Cléirigh's comments treat of some of the same issues raised by the

²⁰ *Foclóir nó Sanasán Nua in a mínighthear cáil eigin dhfoclaibh cruaidhe na Gaeidheilge, ar na sgriobhadh ar urd aibghitre le brathair bochd tuata dOrd S. Froinsias Michéul O Cleirigh, a gColáisde na mBrathar nÉireannach a Lobháin. Ar na chur a gcló maille re hughdardhas. 1643.*

short guides under discussion in this paper and have some importance for the grammaticographical techniques being developed in such works.

Ó Cléirigh's *Foclóir* has the distinction of being the first dictionary printed in the Irish language and, indeed, marks one of the earliest attestations of the word *foclóir* (Knott 1962). It is concerned only with 'difficult words' (*dfoclaib cruaidhe*) found in many old books (*as morán do sheinleabhraibh*) and itself draws on earlier glossaries; as observed by Mac Amhlaigh (2008: 1–7), the scope of Ó Cléirigh's *Foclóir* is comparable to that of Robert Cawdrey's English dictionary of 1604. The section of the preface which concerns us reads:

An ceathramh ní biodh a fhios ag an áos óg agas ag an áos ainbfis lerab mian na seinleabhair do léughadh (ní nach bfuil na aincheas ar eolchaibh ar tíre) gurab annamh bhios coimhéd aca ar chaol re leathan, no ar leathan re ccaol do sgriobhadh, agas ar [sic] firthearc cuirid uathadh ar na connsainibh mar atá, bh, ch, dh, fh, etc. agas fós as annamh chuirid síneadh fada ar fhoclaibh. Sgriobhthar go minic cuid dona consainibh ar son a cheile, mar ata c, ar son g, agas t, ar son d. Ag so samhail na bfocal tre sa dtuigfidhear sin. Ar son an fhocailsi clog, ionann agas cloc, agad, acat, beag, beac, codladh, cotladh, ard, art, etc. Cuirtheas fós go minic ae, ar son ao, agas ái ar son aoi. agus fós oi ar son aoi. Sompla airsin mar sgriobhthar go minic aedh ionann agas aodh, agas cael as ionann agas caol. Agus bóí agus fós báí as ionann agas báoi. Sgriobhthar go minic E ar son A sna seinleabhraibh, mar ata die, as ionann agas dia, cie as ionann agas cia, etc. Sgriobhthar go minic I ar son A, mar ata so dochuaidh, as ionann agas dichuaidh. Sgriobhthar go coitcheann a, o, u ar son a cheile a ndeireadh focail mar ata sompla, somplo, somplu, ceardcha, ceardcho, ceardchu, etc.

'Fourthly, the young and ignorant who wish to read the old books, (a thing which is not difficult for the educated of our country), must know that they rarely guard against writing slender with broad, or broad with slender, and that they very rarely put the aspirate upon the consonants, as *bh, ch, dh, fh, etc.*, and also that they seldom put the long accent on vowels. Some of the consonants are often written one for another, as *c* for *g*, and *t* for *d*. Here are examples of words by which this will be understood: *clog* the same as *cloc*; *agad, acat*: *beag, beac*: *codladh, cotladh*: *ard, art, etc.* Also *ae* is often put for *ao*, and *ái* for *aoi* and also *oi* for *aoi*. For example *aed*, is often written for *aodh*, and *cael* is the same as *caol*. And *bói* and also *bái* is the same as *báoi*. *E* is often written instead of *A* in the old books, as *die*, which is the same [as] *dia, cie*

which is the same as *cia*, *etc.* *I* is often written instead of *A*, as *dochuaidh* [which is the same as *dichuaidh*].²¹ *a*, *o*, *u* are commonly written for one another at the end of the word, as *tompla* [sic], *tomplo* [sic], *tomplu* [sic], *ceardcha*, *ceardcho*, *ceardchu*, *etc.*’ (Miller 1879–80: 355–6)

The other guides to reading Irish discussed thus far aimed to provide an overview of the basics of Irish spelling, the first as a template for transmitting literacy to protestant catechumens, the second to equip catholic catechists with the wherewithal to catechise in Irish. Ó Cléirigh’s advice on the vagaries of manuscript spelling is a more specialist affair. The ‘young and ignorant’ whom Ó Cléirigh addresses are trainee-scholars in the native schools of hereditary learning with an advanced level of literacy in Irish; his dictionary is intended as an aid in deciphering such obscure works as *Amrae Coluimb Chille* or *Féilire Óengusa* (which he calls *Feilire na Náomh*) (Miller 1879–80: 354).²² Ó Cléirigh’s epistle provides them with a concise treatment of some of the main differences between the orthography most commonly practised in the mid-seventeenth century and the archaic or pseudo-archaic orthography met with in manuscripts written in what Ó Cléirigh’s terms ‘old Irish’ (gen. *na seangháoidheilge*) (Miller 1879–80: 351).²³ Within a single paragraph he conveys a great deal of information concerning the cosmetic differences likely to throw an inexperienced reader of the glossary. One notes that his discussion of vowel-graph variation in unstressed syllables is an improvement on that offered by Ó Kearnigh – Ó Cléirigh hints at the role played by stress in this variation – but, while a better attempt to describe the problem, it remains incomplete, ignoring variation between <i> and <e> in unstressed absolute final position and variation in unstressed initial syllables (in words like *a-mach* etc.); in Ó Cléirigh’s defence, however, it may be that the young readers he had in mind would be familiar with such variation already from the more general orthography they themselves already practised.

1652 *Daniel*

²¹ It would appear that Ó Cléirigh had *da-chuaidh* in mind as the ‘normal’ spelling. The preverb and verbal particle *do* is often spelt *da* in Early Modern Irish. The preverb of *do-ní*, for example, is referred to as *duir ailm coimlenamna* ‘fixed *da*’, for example, in *IGT* III §1. See McManus 2012 for the term *coimhlean(a)mhain*.

²² The preface to An Dubháiltach Mac Fir Bhisigh’s Great Book of Genealogies (begun in April 1649) concludes with an address to ‘the young reader’ (*don óigléughthóir*) alerting him to dialectal variation in the genealogies (Ó Muraíle 2003–4: i §18.2). One wonders whether Mac Fir Bhisigh might have been influenced by Ó Cléirigh’s preface.

²³ Ó Cléirigh, of course, did not have the modern periodisation of the language in mind when he used this term.

The only effort made by the Cromwellian establishment in Ireland to provide printed matter in Irish appears to have been a translation by Godfrey Daniel (alias Gothfraigh Mac Domhnuill) of William Perkins' popular *The Foundation of Christian Religion* (1591), published in Dublin in 1652,²⁴ the year which saw the triumph of the Cromwellian conquest. A modern edition remains a desideratum. The bulk of the text is in two columns with the English text on the left and the Irish translation alongside, but the epistle 'To the Right Honourable, the Commissioners of the Parliament of the Common-wealth of England, for the Affairs of Ireland' is in English only, as are the 'Brief and Plain Rules for the reading of the Irish Tongue', which make up the final seven unnumbered pages of the book (sig. M2r–M3v). Perkins' book set out to explain the fundamentals of the Christian faith in six principles 'necessarie for every ignorant man to learn' (*atá ríachdanach dá nuile dhuine ainbhíofach dfóghluim*); it is a work clearly designed to be used by preachers to instruct their congregations.

Little is known of the life of Godfrey Daniel (Williams 1986: 59–60). He was probably born c. 1618, given that he was elected a Scholar of Trinity College in 1634 (Burchaell and Sadleir 1935: 209), and it was there he most likely obtained his BA and MA. In 1652, he received an annual salary of £40 from the Commonwealth government for preaching the gospel in Irish to 'the Irish' (Seymour 1921: 106–7), and by 1657 at the latest he was serving a congregation in Tully, south County Dublin (Seymour 1921: 210). As noted by Williams, the tithes of this parish belonged to Trinity College, and Daniel's placement there may suggest a continued formal connection to the College (Simington 1945: 271). Daniel refers to the translation of 1652 as his first effort, but contemplated a fuller treatment of the Irish language, as he makes clear on the final page of the epistle ('which Rules, I shall be readier (if I be called therunto, or see it necessarie) to inlarge'). Nicholas Williams praises the high quality of his translation, and – despite occasional minor slips from correct Early Modern Irish grammatical usage – Daniel was indeed a master of the literary idiom. As a

²⁴ [left title] *The Christian Doctrine, or the Foundation of Christian Religion, gathered into six principles. Necessarie for every Man to learn. Translated into Irish by Godfrey Daniel, Master in the Arts. And also Brief and plain Rules for the reading of the Irish tongue.* Printed at Dublin, by Will. Bladen, Anno Dom. 1652.

[right title] *An Teagasg Críostuidhe, nó Fundameint an Chreidim Críosduidhe, ar na chruinníughadh a sé Bpuncuibh Prinnsiopalta. Atá ríachdanach dá nuile dhuine ainbhíofach dfóghluim. Ar na tharruinga nGaoidhilge ré Gothfraigh Mac Domhnuill, Maghistir ionn sna Healadhnachuibh. Agus Mar an gcéudna Ríaglach aithghearr, *7 soiléir do chum na teangadh gaoidhilge do léghadh. Ar na chur a gló a Mbaile Átha Cliath, ré Huill. Bladen, Anno Dom. 1652.*

translator, he was prepared to introduce material of Irish interest to Perkins' text, including a reference to the burlesque Early Modern Irish tale *Feis Tighe Chonáin* (Williams 1986: 62). It has been suggested that he was a relative of William Daniel (alias Uilliam Ó Domhnaill) of the Irish New Testament, but a comparison of their surnames in Irish precludes this (Williams 1986: 191 n. 12). There is no reason to doubt that he was a native speaker of Irish, most likely from Leinster, perhaps – on the basis of his surname – from Wicklow or Queen's County. The information that can be gleaned of his pronunciation should be of particular interest to historical dialectologists.

The fact that Daniel's rules are in English suggests that they were targeted at students and trained preachers who could already read and write English but had not yet mastered (reading) Irish, and some of the information on pronunciation is presented as if the reader had no previous knowledge of Irish phonology. The placement of the rules at the end of the translation rather than at the beginning of the book may indicate that Daniel assumed some of his readers – literate native Irish-speaking preachers like himself, for instance – would not require such introductory matter. Comparisons with English (the word 'English' occurs five times in the rules), 'Latine' (once), Greek ('the Greek dialect' and 'manner' are referred to once each) and especially Hebrew (the language itself or 'the Hebrews' are referred to three times) confirm that Daniel reckoned with a reader who had enjoyed considerable education.²⁵ The subject matter – material to be taught to the ignorant that they may better understand sermons and the liturgy – suggests more specifically a readership involved in preaching the reformed faith or in training for this task.

It is probably not coincidental that Daniel's translation should appear at a time when the Commonwealth government was making greater efforts to encourage preaching in Irish. In August 1652, the government set aside £52 for one year to provide for preaching in Irish in the city of Dublin, with the stipulation that no preacher should receive more than 20 s. per sermon (Seymour 1921: 106). In the same month, Daniel was granted his £40 for preaching (though no location was named in the official record), and the following month John Baskerville was sent to Queen's County as schoolmaster and permitted to preach in Irish

²⁵ Latin, Greek and Hebrew all formed part of the undergraduate curriculum in Trinity College at this time, though more emphasis was placed on Greek after 1637 and the level of Hebrew attained by students may not have been particularly advanced. Masters students like Daniel were expected to undertake further study in Greek and Hebrew (McDowell and Webb 1947: 10–11). It is unlikely that Greek and Hebrew could have been acquired to any great level in Ireland prior to arrival in a university c. 1652.

(Seymour 1921: 106–7). Other examples of such encouragement include efforts to establish preaching in Irish in Athy in 1653 (Seymour 1921: 106). Particularly given that Daniel likely retained a connection with Trinity College, it seems reasonable to suppose that his translation was commissioned for the use of trainee-preachers and ministering graduates of the College.

The ‘Brief and Plain Rules’ begin with a table of eighteen letter-names, followed by their upper- and lower-case forms in Irish type and the corresponding lower-case form in standard English type. The discursive matter begins with the sentence ‘The Irish hath also five vowels’, which are subdivided into ‘*guthaighe caola*: or vowels of a smaller accent’ and ‘*guthaighe leathna*, or vowels of a broader accent’. Variation in the use of <a>, <o>, <u> is noted, but as in Ó Kearnaigh’s *Aibghitir* – and unlike Ó Cléirigh’s advice to the young and ignorant – there are no examples to illustrate that stress plays a role in this vacillation. It is stated that Irish lacks <v> and <j> ‘but *bh* must supply the place of an *v*, consonant’ and <k>, <q>, <x>, <y> and <z> are also wanting, but these latter are ‘supplied by other letters of a Essential denomination’, by which Daniel means that <q>, for example, is supplied by *collúir* [= <c> + <u>]. His treatment of <x> and <z> is somewhat confused: ‘*Straph*, viz. *x*, with a double *cc*; *z* with an *s*’. *Straiph* is normally taken to designate <z>, which represented *st* in the later Middle Ages, while <x> could be used in manuscripts of the period for *c(h)s* and *g(h)s* but not as a substitute for <cc>.

In his brief remarks on the pronunciation of the vowels, Daniel could make reference to English: ‘you pronounce your *i*, like *ee*, in English, and *u*, like *oo* in English, and your *A*, far broader than in English: the English pronounce the letter *a*, as small as the Irish do *ea*.’ An ‘ancient rythm’ giving the five sorts of ‘diphthong’ is then printed:

Ceithre hamharchuill ráitear ann.

Cúig héba fós go coitcheann.

Cúig ifíni muin ar mhuin.

Trí huillenda; óir na haonar.

‘It is said that that there are four vowel-graph combinations beginning with *a* [namely <ae>, <ai>, <ao>, <aoi>]. Further there are generally [agreed] five vowel-graph combinations beginning with *e* [<ea>, <ei>, <eo>, <eoi>, <eu>], five vowel-graph combinations one after the other beginning with *i* [<ia>, <iai>, <io>, <iu>, <iui>],

three vowel-graph combinations beginning with *u* [<ua>, <uai>, <ui>], and *oi* is on its own.’

This would not be its last appearance of these lines in print (further appearances will be noted below), but I do not know the source. The five sorts are then presented in tabular form (trigraphs are included and ligatured forms are given separately), and the note is added, ‘Beyond Seas, they divide them into Diphthongs, and Triphthongs; though the same in substance, but this old division is more methodical, and ought most to be followed’. This would appear to be a swipe at the teaching of Irish in Louvain. The only Irish-language Catholic book to have appeared in print with a discussion of ‘diphthongs’ and ‘triphthongs’ by 1652 was Stapleton’s Catechism, where the diphthongs and triphthongs are indeed treated separately and – unsurprisingly given Stapleton’s lack of expertise – no mention is made of the traditional groupings of vowel graphs, but it seems more likely given the rather sweeping ‘Beyond seas’ that Daniel had in mind the teaching of the Irish Franciscans on the Continent. If the unpublished *Rudimenta Grammaticae Hibernicae* is representative of this teaching,²⁶ the digraphs and trigraphs were indeed treated separately, though the traditional classifications (*amharcholl*, *uilleann* etc.) were retained (Mac Aogáin 1968: 4). Except for <ea> Daniel gives no indication how one is to pronounce these vowel-graph combinations: the pronunciation of <áo> or <áoi> could hardly have been obvious to one unversed in Irish.

Turning to consonants, Daniel begins, ‘The Irish divided their Consonants into five Classes, in imitation of the Hebrews, who divided theirs into, 1. Gutturals, 2. Labials, 3. Palats, 4. Linguals, 5. Dentals’.²⁷ He then gives the five traditional Irish divisions (‘Seven light Consonants’, *Seachd chonsuine édruma* etc.) with the ‘barren letter’ <s> and the observation that <h> ‘is onely an Asperation’. Though the Irish consonant-classes are phonetic (Ó Cuív 1966) like the consonant-classes of traditional Hebrew grammar, the basis of the divisions is not the same, and as such the five Hebrew categories are not of any help to the student in understanding the Irish consonant groups. Assuming that Daniel’s mention of the Hebrew classifications is designed to do more than simply show off his knowledge, the reference to the Hebrew might be intended to draw the reader’s attention to the fact that the

²⁶ Doubt has been expressed as to whether Giolla Brighde (alias Bonaventura) Ó hEódhasa was the author of the *Rudimenta* (Breatnach 2017). For the *Rudimenta* as a source for information on the Irish language and for its indebtedness to the mainland European grammatical tradition as well as to traditional Irish grammatical thought, see Ó Corráin 2017.

²⁷ This division may be as old as the *Sefer Yetzirah*, commonly dated 300–600 A.D. (Klijnsmit 1990: 78–9).

Irish categories too are phonetic and, in the process, to enhance the standing of the Irish grammatical tradition by associating it with that of one of the sacred languages.

Thus far Daniel was following more or less the path of Ó Kearnigh's *Aibghitir*, but his 'Plain and Simple Rules' deal with topics not addressed in the earlier work. Daniel begins a discussion of initial mutations: 'There is most usually in the Irish, *Ecclipsis Consonantium*: i. *Báthadh Consuine* or the extinguishing of a Consonants, as when *f* goeth before *p* as *afphobail*,²⁸ *d* goeth before *t* as *adtáeibh*, *d* goeth before *f* as *dfóghluim* [...]'. These are arranged neatly in columns with a note that only the first letter is to be pronounced

and the other must be silent, and is written onely to shew the Primitive, or the Radix of the word, and therefore they are called Possessive Letters, or *Liter Shelbhuighthe*, because they properly belong to the word; the former Letter notes onely the alteration of the word in Case, Tense, Number or Person: as *Fuil* bloud, *a bhfuil* in bloud...

The use of a Latin technical term here might suggest the influence of the *Rudimenta* or a similar text, but the *Rudimenta* uses somewhat different terminology. Cf. the chapters headed *De ecclipsi quam vocant uirrdiughadh*, which treats of initial nasalisation, and *De extinctione consonantis*, which treats of *báthadh consaine* 'consonantal elision' (Mac Aogáin 1967: 7–9). Indeed, the *Rudimenta* reflects bardic teaching on this issue, for the initial mutations discussed by Daniel here do not fall into the bardic category of *báthadh consaine*, which concerns the delention and/or assimilation of consonants at the juncture of a compound word (e.g. *lámh* + *mín* > Classical Modern Irish *láimín*); Daniel's examples belong to the categories of lenition and nasalisation, while the *d-* of *dfóghluim* is simply the elided preposition *do/de*. On the other hand, Daniel's use of the concept of consonantal elision – whatever its deficiencies measured against bardic categories or modern descriptive frameworks – has the advantage of clarifying how to read the likes of <fph> and <df>, which – for the sounding out of the letters – pose the same problem as *gc-*, *nd-* and the like. The term *liter shelbhuighthe* is also found in the grammar of Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn, son of the famous Tadhg Dall (Mac Aogáin 1968: l. 3112), and there it means 'radical initial consonant'; cf. the likes of *sealbhadh beithe* 'radical *b*' etc. in an earlier bardic didactic poem (Ó Riain 2008). The sweeping references to 'the alteration of the word in Case, Tense, Number or Person' is hardly a serious effort to describe the functions of initial mutations; on the other hand, as

²⁸ <fph> for *ph* is not unusual in contemporary manuscripts. For examples from a manuscript of 1631, see *ABM* 57.1d, 5c, 17c.

these are rules for reading only (that is, reading aloud) further remarks in this area were not strictly necessary.

The pronunciation of <cc>, <tt> and <pp> as /g/, /d/ and /b/ is then dealt with.²⁹ A distinction is made between final and initial <nd>: ‘When the Letter *d*, cometh immediately after *n*, in the latter end of a word, it bears the force of another *n*, as *peand*, *ceand*; but coming in the beginning of a word after *n*, it is quite extinguished, as a *nduine*.’ Here Daniel seems to describe a distinction between /N/ (in *peann*) and /n/ (in *nd*-). He continues on this theme with a discussion of the difference between the pronunciation of <ll>, <rr>, <nn> (and <nd>) on the one hand and <l>, <r> and <n> on the other and sets up the pairs *geall* / *gel*, *tonn* / *tón* and *corr* / *cor*, explaining ‘The former words must be pronounced broader than the latter’. Such nuanced statements on Irish phonetics contrast sharply with Stapleton’s amateurish treatment of Irish sounds and are closer to the detailed remarks on Irish phonology found in the *Rudimenta*. Initial <ng> (the letter-name is given as *ngiatall*) where ‘both letters together must be pronounced’ is briefly discussed (with Greek and Hebrew parallels) and the treatment of consonants concludes with the statement that in all other respects the consonants of Irish are to be pronounced as those of English or Latin. Among the examples of words given to prove this point along with *spódlá* and *sliasad* are *crádh* and *bláth*, presumably chosen because of the initial *cr*- and *bl*-, though clearer examples might have been chosen to avoid confusing the issue of the pronunciation of <dh> and <th>, which have not yet been introduced.

The next section concerns ‘aspirations’, which are defined as follows: ‘An Aspiration is when the Letter *h*, cometh immediately after a Consonant’. Its general effects on various letters and the use of the ‘title [·] which signifieth *h*’ are discussed before Daniel describes the sounds of specific lenited consonants. ‘The Letter *b* Aspirated in the beginning or midst of a word is to be pronounced like *v*, Consonant, as *do bhaile*, *gabháil*: but in the latter end of a word, it is to be pronounced like *u* as a Vowel, or partly like *f*, as *ghabh*, *da raibh*.’³⁰ In the case of <ch>, he must rely on Greek to capture its slender and broad values: ‘The Letter *c* being Aspirated, its strength thereby is partly qualified, and it is to be pronounced like *X Greca*, or *ch* in the Greek manner, as in *chimera*, likewise in Irish, as *do chím*, *do chúalas*, *do chuid*. Initial <dh> and <gh> ‘are to be pronounced like *y* Consonant’, while ‘in the midst

²⁹ For an example of <pp> for <bp> from a late seventeenth-century manuscript, see ABM 401.28d.

³⁰ For initial *bh* and *mh* as /v/ in the Irish of east Leinster, see *SnaG* 474–5. For final *mh* and *bh*, see O’Rahilly 1932: 76 n. 1.

and in the latter end of a word, being Aspirated, they lose, most commonly, their full force, for onely the *h*, is to be founded, as *faghail*, *teagh*, *feadh*, as if it were *faail*, *teah*, *feah*'.³¹ It will be noted that Daniel does not distinguish between the pronunciation of broad and slender initial <dh> and <gh>. There follows a discussion of aspirated <f>, <s> and <t>, which are said to be pronounced /h/: 'do shúil, do thine, fhear, as if it were do húil, do thine, hear'. Daniel here has confused the form of the 2 sing. possessive pronoun *do* before a vowel (*th*' or *h*' pronounced /h/) with an initial mutation proper to *f*-. Aspiration cannot affect <l>, <n> or <r> or vowels, which is accurate enough given that Daniel's orthographical definition of 'aspiration', 'but it is set still before the Vowels, as *uile*, *na huile*'. <sb>, <sd>, <sg> and <sm> are immune from aspiration. The nasalisation of vowels is briefly noted before an informative discussion of <mh>: 'When the Letter *m* is Aspirated in the beginning of a word, it must be pronounced like *v*, Consonant, but in the latter end like *u*, Vowel, as *do mhir*, *do lámh*, as it were *do vir*, *do lau*, sound the last somewhat through the nose'. This section concludes with the statement that <ph> is to be pronounced as <f> and notice of the use of 'one Accent over the Vowels [...] called *síne fada*, that is, *a long reach*, like *Metheg*, or *Mazze* in the Hebrew, thus noted [']'.

The final page of the brief rules is headed *Nod. Abbreviations*. and provides explanations not only for symbols such as the Tironian *et* and the ampersand, but also for *n*- and *m*-strokes, ligatured letters and letters with puncta. The use of a suprascript consonant over another consonant to represent *r* + vowel is explained as is the use of a suprascript *a* similar in form to an <n> for *ra* and the standard abbreviation of *mac*. Daniel concludes, 'There are many other Abbreviations in Irish Manuscripts, wherein our Print is deficient, therefore I am inforced to omit them'.³² Indeed, apparently for want of a Tironian *us*-symbol, the word *agus* is frequently printed *ag9* in the book. In his typographical preferences as well as his more refined linguistic sensibility, Daniel contrasts sharply with Stapleton, for whereas the latter was eager to do away with abbreviations, Daniel made liberal use of those available to him in his book. It is unclear from this remark, however, whether Daniel would have preferred more abbreviations for the purpose of printing his own Irish text or merely for illustrative purposes in the context of an introduction to Irish spelling.

³¹ For the emergence of stressed monosyllables ending in a short vowel in Early Modern Irish and their pronunciation, see Hoyne 2016: 196–7 and Ó Murchú 1997: 184–5.

³² Queen Elizabeth's Irish font was the only one available at this time.

Detailed and for the most part well-organised, Daniel's rules are – despite occasional omissions and inaccuracies – an admirable treatment of Irish spelling and pronunciation. His focus is clearly on those points of Irish orthography where the correct pronunciation would not be obvious to a person literate in English. Presumably oriented around his own usage, the prominence afforded by Daniel to less common spelling conventions like <fph> and <bb> may seem to us excessive. The guide to the pronunciation was probably also dialect-specific in some points (such as the treatment of <mh>). One can only regret that he did not compose his projected fuller treatment of the Irish language. Such a work might well have resembled the *Rudimenta Grammaticae Hibernicae* in scope and detail – though Daniel clearly did not have the grounding in bardic grammar enjoyed by Bonaventura Ó hEódhasa and other continental Irish Franciscans – and could have yielded valuable information on the Irish of Leinster in the mid-seventeenth century.

Daniel's rules cannot have sufficed on their own as an introduction to reading Irish even for native speakers with a reading knowledge of English, but it is a valiant attempt particularly given his lack of advanced formal training in the Irish language. One wonders whether they might have formed the basis for instruction in the Irish language in Trinity College, but there is no evidence that this was the case. The 'Brief and plain rules' do not deal with grammar, syntax or vocabulary, and one might well wonder what use it would be for a learner of Irish – if Daniel really had such a reader in mind – to have mastered the sounding-out of letters without any understanding of the language itself, but as Perkins' English and Daniel's translation are presented in parallel columns, the idea may have been that the learner could use the English as a key to the Irish.³³ On the other hand, it might be that Daniel's book was bilingual in order to facilitate preaching in both languages.³⁴ In contrast, the Welsh translation of Perkins' work published three years earlier is monolingual.³⁵ This version begins with 'the Welsh Alphabet, for the Instruction of the

³³ This is the reverse of the procedure envisaged by Stapleton, who saw the Irish as a key to understanding the Latin of his catechism (pp. [xv–xvi]).

³⁴ A curious example of bilingual preaching is recorded from 1655. Jeremy O'Quin and a companion were dispatched to preach in Connacht and Co. Clare, the former to preach in Irish and the latter in English (Seymour 1921: 108).

³⁵ *The Foundation of Christian Religion. Gathered into Six Principles, by Mr. William Perkins. Translated into Welsh. Whereto also is added the Welsh Alphabet, for the Instruction of the Unlearned in that Language. By E. R. Sail Crefydd Gristnogawl Wedi ei rhannu yn Chewch o Rannau neu Wyddorion, O Waith W.P. Wedi ei Gyfiaethu. Ir Iaith Gymráec ai osod allan. Drwy ddymuniad. E.R., London: Printed by Richard Constable, for George Calvert, and are to be sold at his shop at the sign of the Half-Moon in Waltings-street, 1649.*

Unlearned in that Language’. If he ever saw it, it does not appear to have had any influence on Daniel.³⁶

Like other protestant works, Daniel’s translation did not circulate in manuscript, but his guide to reading Irish found some users. Andrew Sall (1612–82), who cooperated with Robert Boyle in the project to print the Irish Bible, commented in a letter of 26 October 1680, ‘I find besides another larger catechism with places of scripture printed in Irish at Dublin the year 52, by one Godfrey Daniel. with rules for reading the Irish tongue short and excelent taking up no more then half a sheet of paper’ (Hunter et al 2001: 220). Lambeth Palace Library Sion L40.2/E22 (6) contains a copy of the rules made by the English divine, Edmund Gibson (1669–1748), probably around 1690, when he catalogued James Ware’s Irish manuscripts deposited by the Earl of Clarendon in Tenison’s Library in London.

1663 *S. D.*

In 1663 in Louvain, an Irish-language catechism based largely on previous works by Bonaventura Ó hEódhasa and Antoin Gearnon was published by ‘S. D.’,³⁷ identified as John Dowley (the Irish form of his name was probably Seán Ó Dubhlaoich, though the spelling Ó Dúlaidh is found in manuscripts), abbot of Killamanagh (?), Co. Galway, in 1645, vicar-general of Killala in 1676. Unsurprisingly, in the preface, Dowley reveals the primary focus of the work to be meeting the catechetical needs of children, whose education has been retarded by an oppressive Protestant regime (pp. iii–vi). He also expresses the hope that the

³⁶ The Welsh Alphabet was printed ‘chiefly for their sakes who would learne to read Welsh themselves, or would instruct and teach others to reade Welsh: For many in Wales, Welshmen born, have some knowledge in the English tongue, yet know nothing in there owne language’ (p. 1). The Alphabet itself takes up four pages (pp. 3–6), but is much simpler than Daniel’s ‘Brief and plain rules’. The Welsh letters (*Y llythyrennau Cymraec*) are listed three times (roman lower-case, italic lower-case and roman upper-case). The absence of <k>, <q>, <x> and <z> is briefly discussed (p. 3). The rest of the Alphabet is devoted to ‘The Sound of the Letters’, which are discussed in alphabetical order. Following the Welsh alphabet, <ng> follows <g> and precedes <h>. After the long discussion of <y> and before <w>, there is a brief discussion of hiatus or non-hiatus when <i> precedes a vowel (p. 6).

³⁷ *Suim bhunudhasach an Teaguisg Chriosdaidhe, a bpros agus a ndán. Maille re hoifig spioradálta an chreidmhigh gach laé; *7 lé húrnaighthibh caoíndúthachtacha eile roimh fhaoísidin is roimh chumaoíneach, agus ina ndiáigh. Farré clár na bpeacadh fhoghnaos roimh fhaoísidin. Ar na ttarrang, agus ar ná gcur a mach a nois ga nuádh lé S. D. Imperitos docete liberè. Esdrae 1 cap. 7 ver. 25. Audiens sapiens sapientior erit. Prov. 1 ver. 5. Agus ar na chur i gcló i gcoláisti na mbráthar mionúr nÉireannach i Lobháin maille le húghdarras. 1663.*

book will reach parts of Ireland now inaccessible to the clergy (and in this context even makes reference to Gaelic Scotland and to Irish-speakers in the Americas). Presumably he was relying on literate lay people to carry out the instruction in places not served by ecclesiastics.

This short and simple didactic work concludes with nine pages headed *Mionghraimer le na ccuidighthear lais an aós óg teacht chum Gaoidheilge do leughadh, agas do sgriobhadh* ‘A little grammar by which the young may be aided to learn to read and write Irish’ (pp. 86–94). The first paragraph exhorts those who wish to learn Irish to pay attention to the rules set out in the grammar, which presumably were transmitted to them by oral instruction.³⁸ The second states that the most important thing for the learner to master is the proper sound of the vowels in combination (*an foghar dílios bhiós ag na guthaighibh ghreamaigheas dá cheíle*). There follows an alphabet in the standard Latin order with <h> after <g>, and <k>, <x>, <y> and <z> included. <u> and <v> are not distinguished, only the former being given.

Following this common abbreviations, symbols and ligatures are explained in four columns. These include æ. i. ae, the Tironian *quia* symbol for Irish <ar>, the use of suprascript vowels and the punctum, tall <e>, ligatured <rr>, etc. Though the likes of *dro*, *dru*, etc. are explained, no suprascript vowels except <i> and suprascript <a> are actually produced here (pp. 86–7). The use of a stroke (*sdríoc*) over a vowel to indicate that the vowel is long is described, as is the use of suprascript vowels to indicate *r* + the given vowel, and the puncta (*na puingcsin*) (p. 87).

This is followed by a short treatise (*trachda* [sic]) on vowels and consonants divided into chapters. The first concerns the number of letters (seventeen). <h> is not a letter proper but *comhartha na hanála*, while <x>, <y> and <z> are mere ‘pilgrims’ (*oilithrigh*) from the Greeks. Similarly, there is no use for <k> and <q> as their sounds are the same as .c. *ar na cheangal dailm, nó dúr. eadhon .a. nó .u.*, ‘c attached to *ailm* or to *úr*, that is *a* or *u* [*ca* and *cu*’ (pp. 87–8). Note that the letter-names used in the last quotation have not been previously introduced.

The second chapter concerns the vowels only. The vowel is defined as ‘a letter that makes a sound without the support of a consonant’ (*litir do ní guth gan congnamh connsoine*), of which there are five, three broad and two slender, but these appear in great

³⁸ *Béaloideas* is S. D.’s term for oral instruction (p. iv).

number by combining with one another (*tiaghaid a niomad nairimh lé na ccoimhcheangal*), wording which recalls Ó Kearnaigh's *coimhcheangail*. When two vowels combine (*An tan ghreamaigheas dá ghuthaighe dá chéile*), these are termed *deafhoghraich*, of which there are twelve (<ae>, <ao>, <ai>, <oi>, <ua>, <ui>, <ea>, <eo>, <eu>, <ia>, <io> and <iu>); he then defines the 'triphthongs' of which there are five (<aoi>, <uai>, <eoi>, <iai>, and <iui>). It is then stated that the poets (*na filidhe*) divide these into five classes (*a ccúig aicmeadhuibh*), quoting the verse beginning *Ceithri hamharchuill ríomhthar ann*, but gives only four *éabha* rather than Daniel's five. These five classes are then listed with examples in a table like that in Daniel's 'Brief and plain rules'; unlike in Daniel, the ordering follows that of the verse and <éi> is given as if it was part of the vowel-combinations beginning with o- (pp. 88–9). There follows a note stating that <ei> has not been counted above: *gidheadh atá urdail ris gach ndeafhoghrach oile do brígh, ⁊ dfhoghar aice*, 'however, it corresponds to all the other diphthongs as regards force and sound'. I do not understand this statement. The 'triphthongs' are said to be long by nature as are <ao>, <ua>, <eu> and <ia>, while the eight remaining diphthongs (*an tochdar eile*) may be long or short according to the quantity of the syllable (*do réir chaindidheachta an tshiolla a mbíd*) (p. 89). This chapter concludes with the observation that these vowel-combinations produce a single sound, so that in a single syllable *fear* is not to be pronounced as *fe.ar*. nor *crúaidh* as *cru.aidh* (p. 90), a potentially problematic aspect of Irish orthography also brought out in Stapleton.

The third chapter treats of consonants. A consonant is defined as a letter that makes a sound when combined with a vowel and that cannot make a sound on its own (*litear do ní foghar ar na ceangal do ghuthaighe agus leis nach éidir foghar do dhéanamh na haónar*). These are twelve in number, of which <h> 'seizes' nine (*gabhaidh .h. greim do naóí cconnsoinibh dhióbh*). <h> cannot seize <l>, <n> or <r>, while in speech (*san chanamhain*), <fh> is silent. When <t> precedes <s>, it (<s>) has no value except that of <h> (as in *ón tslighe*). The statement that <sh> is pronounced like <h> elsewhere too is rather clumsily expressed (*brígh .h. a mhain bhíos ann gach áit oile aca*) (pp. 90–1). The discussion of the realisation of <th> reflects the tension between the written and spoken word, but the point is not well explained:

Th. foghar .h. a mháin bhíos aca ar uairibh, foghar díleas .t. ar uairibh oile, marbhthar, buailtear. Leighthear na focailsi ar an modhsa mar nach bíadh .f. na .s. na .t. na ttús fa íon. fa húil. marbh-har, 7cra (p. 91)

‘*Th* sometimes only has the sound *h*, sometimes the proper sound of *t*, [as in] *marbhthar*, *buailtear*. These words are read in this way, as if there was no *f* or *s* or *t* at the beginning of them: *fa íon* [= *fhíon*], *fa húil* [= *shúil*], *marbh-har* [= *marbhthar*], etc.’

The point with regard to the pronunciation of <th> is that the passive verbal ending *-th(e)ar* (as in *marbhthar*), which is normally pronounced as if written *-h(e)ar*, is in certain circumstances (after *-d*, *-dh*, *-l*, *-n*, *-t*, *-th*, *-s*) pronounced (but, as here, generally also written!) *-t(e)ar* (as in *buailtear*), something also discussed in the *Rudimenta* (Mac Aogáin 1967: ll. 239–42).

<gh> and <dh> are said to rarely have any value in the middle or end of a word (so that *fághail*, *cneadh* and *breadha* are to be pronounced as if written *fáail*, *cnea* and *breaa*),³⁹ but here again a concern with sandhi phenomena surfaces as the condition is added *muna tteagmhaid a ccorp comhfhocail, nó greama comhfhocail* ‘unless they happen to be within a nominal compound or the juncture of prefix and the noun with which it is compounded’ (p. 91). The technical terms *comhfhocal* (a ‘proper’ compound, like *grian* ‘river-bed’ + *sruth* ‘stream’ → *grianruth* ‘(shallow) stream on a river-bed’, where the discrete elements can function as words in their own right) and *greim comhfhocail* (a ‘quasi-compound’, where a prefix which cannot occur outside of composition combines with a word that can exist non-compounded to alter its meaning, as in the negative prefix *di-* + *buan* ‘permanent’ → *diombuan* ‘impermanent’) are not explained here. These terms are known from bardic didactic works and, indeed, occur in *Rudimenta Grammaticae Hibernicae* (where the examples above are used to illustrate them) (Mac Aogáin 1967: ll. 471–7 and Mac Cárthaigh 2014: 183). By mentioning these here, Dowley has in mind sandhi environments in which *dh* and *gh* will be de-lenited (and de-voiced) (e.g. in *deaghchlann*, which was realised in Classical Modern Irish poetry as if written *deaclann*), though these are relevant to other consonants too.

<ph> is dispatched with little comment – it is said to regularly (*do ghnath*) have the value of <f>, but no exceptions are given – before Dowley turns to <bh>.

An bhrígh bhíos ag a.u. [*sic?*] a Laidin ré nguthaighe, nó na ndhiáigh: an brígh
cheadhna bhíos ag .bh. san nGaoidhilg roimhe guthaighe, nó na dhiaigh, vale: san

³⁹ Cf. *Vulgo iam corrupta prouintiatione vix ullum sonum edunt, ita ut haec vox v.g. faghail legitur faail* (Mac Aogáin 1967: ll. 109–11.)

bhaile. An bhrígh a tá ag .u. san siolla Laidnesi, arva, an bhrigh cheadna bhíos ag .bh. a ndiaigh chonnsoine san nGaoidhilg, balbh, arbhar, 7cra. (p. 91)

‘The value that *au* [sic?] has in Latin before or after a vowel, *bh* in Irish has the same value before or after a vowel, [as in] *vale*, *san bhaile*. The value that *u* has in the Latin syllable, *arva*, *bh* has the same value after a consonant in Irish, [as in] *balbh*, *arbhar*, etc.’

<mh> proves more problematic.

An bhrigh cheadna, bhíos ag .mh. acht gurab truime dhorda a fogharsa, a mháin, lamh, ní bhi brigh san chanamhuin ar úairibh ag .m[h]. cuimhne doimhne, domhnach cantar íad mar de [sic] bheidís sgriobhtha ar an modhsa: cúine, doíne, dónach.

‘*Mh* has the same value [as *bh*], except that its sound is heavier and darker, [as in] *a-mháin*, *lámh*; in speech *m[h]* sometimes does not have any value, [as in] *cuimhne*, *doimhne*, *domhnach*; these are said as if they were written in the following way: *cuíne*, *doíne*, *dónach*.’

If Dowley was indeed a Connachtman (probably from Galway or Mayo), as seems most likely, this pronunciation of medial palatal <mh> is somewhat surprising as it is normally pronounced /v/ in Connacht today (*SnaG* 554–5), but there are a handful of words in which palatal <mh> is lost with compensatory vowel-lengthening (including, in some parts of Galway, *cuimhne*) and it may be that Dowley meant to indicate that only a handful of words are pronounced in this way. Alternatively, Dowley may have intended to draw attention to a particular pronunciation of <mh> found in other dialects, given his hope that the work would circulate widely.

<ch> is said to have the same value as in Latin, as illustrated by Latin *Chorus Enoch* and Irish *an chora Eanach* (p. [92]).⁴⁰

Though he does not advertise the change of focus, Dowley now turns his attention to nasalised letters, treating first of <mb>.

An tan teagmhaid, mb. ar gualainn a chéile [a] neíntshiolla tosaigh focail, ní bhí brígh ag .b. san chanamhain a nuairsin, ar mbrathair, ar mbél, ar mbúachail.

⁴⁰ Numbered 29 through a typographical error.

‘When *m* and *b* meet together in one syllable at the beginning of a word, *b* has no value in speech then, [as in] *ar mbráthair*, *ar mbél*, *ar mbuachaill*.’

<bp>, <cc> and <gc>, <nd>, <bf>, <dt> and <tt> and finally <ng> are dealt with in much the same manner, but in the case of <ng> we are told that it has a ‘single sound without division’ (*aon fhoghar a mháin gan roinn*).

<rr>, <ll> and <nn> are the subject of the next paragraph (pp. 92–3). These normally have a ‘strong sound’ (*foghar laidir*). Medial or final <nd> or <dn> (in *ceand*, *peand* and *cēadna*) have the value of <nn>, while <ln> and <dl> have the value of <ll> (*codladh/colladh* and *colna/colla*). <ld> is not discussed, probably because Dowley did not himself use it in his catechism. The next paragraph returns to <ng> but this time a non-initial example is also included (*ar ngealla*, *ar tteanga*). There follows a general comment on syllabification arising out of the repetition of the rule that <ng> is to be pronounced as a single unit:

An connsoine bhíos a lár focail, ris an tshiolla [*sic*] bhíos roimhe as coir a cheangal: ghidheadh más comhfocal é, as don tshiolla thig na dhíaigh as coir a cheangal. (p. 93)

‘A consonant in the middle of a word, it should be connected with the syllable before it; however, if it is a compound, it should be connected to the syllable that follows after it.’

This is another manifestation of the author’s concern with sandhi phenomena. Though no examples are provided at this point, Dowley seems to have in mind the likes of *maca* (acc. pl. ‘sons’, where <c> belongs to the first syllable) and *maiceal* (*mac* + *geal*, where <c> belongs to the second syllable). He continues on this theme in a new paragraph.

An tan bhíos níos a lía ina aonchonnsoine ann, leanaid don tshiolla théid rompa an tan as féidir é go hoireamhnach, 7 an tan nach fheidir, roinntear idir dhá shiolla iád, marcach: sanntach, siubhlach, súaimhneach. Greamaighid na connsoine teanda .i. rr. ll. nn. ng. don tsiolla bhíos rompa; barrshlim, mallghlór, ceainnlíaithe [*sic*].

‘When there is more than one consonant, they adhere to the syllable that precedes them when that can be done conveniently, and when it cannot, they are divided between two syllables [as in] *marcach*, *sanntach*, *siubhlach*, *súaimhneach*. The firm

consonants, i.e. *rr*, *ll*, *nn*, *ng*, attach to the syllable that precedes them [as in] *barrshlim*, *mallghlór*, *ceinnliath*.’

When Dowley writes of ‘one consonant’ (*aonchonnsoine*), he is thinking in terms of consonant-graphs, and so feels the need to specify that <rr>, <ll>, <nn> and <ng>, which signify single sounds, are not subject to the same ‘breaking’ that can take places in the clusters <rc>, <nt>, <bhl> and <mhn>; the ‘firm consonants’ can ‘conveniently’ (*go hoireamhnach*) be pronounced as part of the first syllable, though they are written with more than one letter. The mention of ‘firm consonants’ leads Dowley to remark on the consonant-classes, which have only now been introduced into the discussion:

Roinntear na connsoine a sé haicmeadhaibh ar nach laibheoram ann so, oír as a nealadhain an dána atá riachdanas riú.

‘The consonants are divided into six classes, which I will not discuss here, because they are [only] needed in the art of bardic poetry.’

The acknowledgement of this omission and the reference to the work of bardic poets triggers a rush of other technical terms:

Da bhfhiafraighthea cread bheanas dona litribh gan a bhfhoghar díleas do bhéith aca do ghnáth? a deirim gurab iád. báthodh guthaighe, 7 connsoine cumhachta h. 7 connsoine, cadad, 7 uirrdhiughadh as cionntach riú. (pp. 93–4)

‘If one were to ask what deprives letters of having their proper sound in general, I say that the elision of vowels and consonants, the power of <h> with consonants, delention, and eclipsis are responsible for them.’

The guide then concludes in a similar spirit to Ó Kearnaigh’s endorsement of the bardic schools:

Gí bé lér ab mían a bhfhios so dfhaghail, go fóirleathan leaghadh an gramadach gaoidhilge ina ttráchdar orra fa seach. (p. 94)

‘Whoever wishes to know about these in depth, let him read the Irish grammar in which they are separately discussed.’⁴¹

⁴¹ Note here the use of *gramadach* rather than *graiméar* to refer to a work of grammar.

This is presumably a reference to *Rudimenta Grammaticae Hibernicae* or something similar, in which all of these topics are indeed treated. Indeed, Dowley's *cumhachta h* looks like a rough translation of *potestas aspirationis h in consonantes* (Mac Aogáin 1968: ll. 70–81).

Towards the end of his short grammar, Dowley seems to lose control of his material, introducing new technical terms only to refuse to explain them, and he struggles throughout to synthesise the larger grammatical work (most probably *Rudimenta Grammaticae Hibernicae*) with which he was familiar. His debt to the Latin grammatical tradition is obvious too in his definitions of 'vowel' and 'consonant' and terms such as *cainnigheacht* 'quantity' – unusual in these guides – and the emphasis placed on syllabification. A good teacher might have made good use of this guide in instructing the young, but the guide itself is too concerned with complications it does not explain to be regarded as a success in its own right.

1680 short catechism

The project to finally print the entire Irish Bible was driven by Robert Boyle, who arranged for a new type (Moxon) based on that of Louvain to replace Queen Elizabeth's Irish type. The first fruits of this renewed interest in publishing in Irish on the part of the Restoration Protestant establishment in Ireland was a short catechism of only fourteen sparsely laid-out pages printed in London in 1680.⁴² The work was published anonymously, though it may have been overseen by Andrew Sall, assistant to Boyle in the Irish Bible enterprise. As has already been mentioned (### above), Sall thought highly of Daniel's rules and their influence is quite obvious in the 1680 guide to reading Irish, but in the terminology we may have some echoes too of Dowley's 1663 grammar: both the 1663 and 1680 guides call themselves a *graiméar*, and in both we find *comhartha na hanála* and the idiom *gabhaidh h greim* 'h seizes' to describe lenition. Whoever composed this guide was not a product of the bardic schools, which were in any event all but dead by this period; not only does he make little use of native technical terminology, but his own spelling shows several features that would have been unacceptable to native literati.

The 1680 catechism, like Ó Kearnaigh's 1571 book, is clearly designed for the classroom: the title-page indicates that it is for use in preparation for confirmation and the question-and-answer dialogue is presented as an exchange between *An Maighisdir* 'the

⁴² *An Teagasg Criosduighe: as cóir do nuile dhuine dfoghluim, suil cuirfigther fa láimh easbuig é. Ar na chur a ccló, a Lunnduin a ttigh Robert Ebheringam, an bliadhain daois an Tighearna 1680.*

master’ and *An Scoláir* ‘the scholar’, whom the master addresses as *a leinibh* ‘O child’ (p. 10). The short grammar which begins the book (*Grammeir aithghearr na Goidhilge* pp. 1–3)⁴³ is clearly pitched at a less advanced audience than Daniel’s rules.

It begins with an alphabet (without letter-names) of eighteen letters (<x> is included) each of which is given twice (upper-case and lower-case), except for <a>, which is given three times (two forms of capital <a> and a lower-case form). There follows a list of the lenited consonants which are explained (lenited *b* is glossed *i. bh* etc.), as is the <e> caudata (*i. ea*), tall <e> with a length mark (*i. éa*), ligatured <e> + <c> (*i. eac*), the Tironian *quia*-symbol with suprascript <i> for *air* (but not the simple *ar*-symbol), the Tironian *et*, <u> + subscript *i*, ligatured <a> + <ó> (*i. áo*), <tt> (*i. d*) and <cc> (*i. g*). The *n*-stroke is not explained, though it is used in the grammar; it would presumably be familiar from contemporary English and Latin books.

The first sentence declares there are eighteen letters (and lists them again) and <h> is excluded from the list (*Ní litir, h, acht comhartha na hanála*, ‘*H* is not a letter but the mark of aspiration’). The vowels are listed and subdivided into broad and slender. We are told that ‘diphthongs’ (*deafhoghraigh*) and ‘triphthongs’ (*treafhoghraigh*) are formed from combinations of vowels (*do na guthaighibh arna ccoimhcheangal ré chéile*) – wording which recalls Ó Kearnaigh’s *coimhcheangail* ‘combinations’ – and are to be pronounced as single sounds. The number of ‘diphthongs’ is given as thirteen of which <áe>, <áo>, <eó>, <éu>, <ía> and <úa> are always long and <ai>, <ea>, <ia>, <io>, <oi> and <ui> are short or long. This gives us only twelve ‘diphthongs’: short <iu> and <eo> (in *fiuchadh* and *deoch*, for example) find no place in this list.⁴⁴ In addition, the classification of <ia> as a short diphthong must be a mistake. Five long triphthongs are given (<aói>, <eói>, <íái>, <iúi>, <uái>).

There are said to be twelve consonants, nine of which – , <c>, <d>, <f>, <g>, <m>, <p>, <s>, <t> – <h> can ‘seize’ (*a naói dá ngabhann, h, greim*) and three to which <h> is never ‘attached’ (*dá nach cceangaltar, h, go bráth*), viz. <l>, <n> and <r>. <bh> and <mh> are said to have the sound-value of *u*, *connsoin* ‘*v*, consonant’. This recourse to a metalingual ‘consonantal <v>’ as a guide to pronunciation anticipates the reference to English in the discussion of the pronunciation of <dh> and <gh>: *ní mór nach brígh, y, sa mbéurla bhíos aca*, ‘it is almost the power of *y* in English that they have’; this represents something of a

⁴³ <mm> here and the want of a palatal glide-vowel presumably reflect the influence of English.

⁴⁴ Both Ó Kearnaigh and Daniel omit examples of short *eo* in their treatment of vowels. Ó Kearnaigh does not have <ei> at all and it is added as if an afterthought by Dowley in 1663.

departure from the 1652 rules, which gave <h> as an approximation for medial <gh> and <dh>. Following Daniel, Latin (*ch sa laidin*) and Greek (*x sa ngréigis*) are introduced to explain the sound of <ch>. <fh> is said to have no value, while <ph> is pronounced like <f>. <sh> and <th> are pronounced like <h>.

Daniel's influence is obvious again in the treatment of the initial mutations: *An tan do churthar connsoin roimhe chonnsoin shealbhuighe a nfocail, ní bhíonn brígh ag an cconnsoin shealbhuighe, mar atá, príósún, a bpríósún, nó a bríósún*, 'When a consonant is put in front of the radical consonant of a word, the radical consonant has no value, as in, *príósún, a bpríósún* or *a bríósún*'. (Note that the term *connsoin shealbhuighe* here is not explained; presumably the school-master would have encountered this phrase or Daniel's similar *liter shealbhuighthe* in the course of his own education.) Further examples are given to illustrate the pronunciation of nasalisation of *c, d, f, g* and *p*; *t, roimhe s* 't before s'; and nasalisation of *t*. We are further told that <h>, <n> or <t> can be placed on vowels (*i. arán, a harán, a narán, an tarán* 'i.e. bread, her bread, their bread, the bread'). Here again we see some important improvements on Daniel's rules: there is nothing corresponding to his *dfóghluim*, which confused the issue of initial mutations by treating <d> as a mutated letter, or *fphobul* (more usually spelt *ph-*), and several omissions in Daniel's treatment are supplied. Perhaps because of the inclusion of <fph> and <pp>, Daniel neglected to treat of <bp>, and he makes no mention of *t-* and *h-*mutations. In defence of Daniel, of course, it could be said that his guide was concerned with differences between Irish and English pronunciation of letters: the pronunciation of *an t-arán* requires no special introduction in this regard, while the pronunciation of the <dt> of *dtáeibh* does. The treatment of <nd> in the 1680 catechism also departs from Daniel's rules: *Agus nd, a lár, nó a ndeireadh focail, brígh nn, bhíos aca*, 'And *nd* in the middle or at the end of a word, they have the value of *nn*'. <cc> and <tt> are again said to stand for <g> and <d> respectively. Daniel's <pp> is not mentioned.

There follow two columns of syllables (*ba, be, bi, bo, bu* parallel with *bha, bhe, bhi, bho bhu* etc.) concluding with three lines of monosyllabic pairs in the second column that differ from one another in their initial (*baóth, maóth; maóin, caóin* etc.). These look to be rudimentary reading or spelling exercises. If so, this is the first occasion on which spelling exercises for Irish appeared in print.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ These may have been inspired by the syllable-based spelling and reading exercises familiar in contemporary English-language printing. See, for example, Thomas Lye's *A New Spelling Book: or, Reading and Spelling English made easie. Wherein all the Words of our English Bible Are set down in an Alphabetical order, and*

No doubt the effectiveness of these rules would depend much on the teacher, for they were clearly designed as a teaching aid. In some respects they appear rather badly conceived: references to English pronunciation seem out of place in a guide designed to be used by someone who could already read Irish. Though indebted to Daniel's rules of 1652 and much shorter than that manual, the *Grammeir* improves on some aspects of its antecedent, silently correcting a few instances of confusion and adhering to more widely accepted orthographical norms (as in the omission of Daniel's <fph> and <pp>). But the *Grammeir* does more than synthesise and refine Daniel's rules: it also expands on the earlier work in points (by addressing *t*-mutation of *s*-, for instance). The focus of the *Grammeir* is still very much on spelling and pronunciation – this is not a 'grammar' of Irish in any modern sense – but there is an inchoate attempt to provide a fuller account of Irish grammatical phenomena in the treatment of *h*- and *t*-prothesis (and *n*- before a vowel) that is not motivated by any comparison with another language or any particular difficulty in relating spelling to pronunciation: by connecting these changes of spelling more clearly not only to changes in pronunciation but also to changes in meaning for an Irish-speaking student body, the author of the 1680 grammar takes the first step in such a guide – admittedly quite a small step – towards a proper functional account of mutations in Irish, towards grammatical analysis rather than the mere relation of symbols to sounds.

Richardson's efforts

In 1711, John Richardson (1669–1747), rector of Annagh in the parish of Belturbet, Co. Cavan from 1709, had published a volume of Irish-language sermons.⁴⁶ All of these were translations from English, except perhaps the first, which may be Richardson's own composition. The other sermons were Irish renderings of sermons by John Tillotson (1630–94) and William Beveridge (1637–1708) translated by Richardson's assistants, Philip Mág Brádaigh and Seón Ó Maolchonaire. Richardson was born in Co. Tyrone and educated in Trinity College, but he was not a native speaker of the language; nonetheless he was at the forefront of efforts to encourage greater use of Irish by the Established Church in Ireland

divided into their distinct Syllabls (1677), a reworking of a book originally published in 1673 (Alston 1969).

⁴⁶ [upper title] *Seanmora ar na Priom Phoncibh, na Chreideamh. Ar na Ttaruing go Gaidhlig, agus ar na Ccur a Ccló a Lunnduin Tre Ebhlin Everingham, 1711.*

[lower title] *Sermons on the Principal Points of Religion, translated into Irish. London: Printed by Elinor Everingham, 1711.*

from around 1709. He learnt the language himself and used it in preaching, though his own efforts in the language reveal that he did not attain complete fluency.⁴⁷

For our purposes the portion of the 1711 work that is of interest is the alphabet (18 letters including <h> but with no letter-names) and the list of contractions (the *sed*-symbol for *achd*; the *air*-symbol; tall <e> + <c>; <e> caudata; tall <e> + length-mark and *n*-stroke) beneath their expansions and a list of dotted consonants beneath their respective consonants combined with <h>, and finally <u> + subscript <i>. These are printed at the end of the book without comment and recall the list of abbreviations in Daniel and the alphabet in the 1680 catechism.

A year later Richardson published an edition of John Lewis' *The Church Catechism Explain'd* (first published in 1700), to which he added an Irish translation,⁴⁸ another shorter catechism,⁴⁹ and his revised edition of the 1608 Irish Book of Common Prayer (for parts of

⁴⁷ For Richardson's life, see Williams 1986: 104–118 and Morley 2009.

⁴⁸ [upper title] *The Church Catechism explain'd by way of question and answer; and confirm'd by scripture proofs: collected by John Lewis, Minister of Margate in Kent. And Render'd into Irish, by John Richardson, Minister of Belturbet in Ireland, Chaplain to His Grace James Duke of Ormond, and St George Lord Bishop of Clogher, 1712.*

[lower title] *Caitecism na heaglaise minighthe, ar mhodh Cheiste agus Fhreagra, *7 c. Do comhchruingheadh ré Séon Leomhuis, *7 c. Agus do cuireadh a Ngaidheilig, Ré Séon Riochardson Ministear Bhealturbet a nEirinn, *7 Seiplin dá ghrás Seumas Dhuice Ormhudhan, *7 do St Seoirse Easbuc Chlochair.*

[small imprint] *London, Printed by E. Everingham, at the seven Stars in Ave-Mary-Lane, near Ludgate, 1712.*

[main imprint] *A Lunndain, Ar na chur a gcló ré E. Ebheriongham, ag na seacht Realt a Sráid-Abhé-Mháiria, 1712.*

[secondary title] *Prayers for the use of the Charity-Schools. London: Printed by Eleanor Everingham, at the Seven Stars in Ave-Mary-Lane, near Ludgate, 1712.*

Ornaigh lé haghaidh usaide na Scol Charthanais. A Lunnduin: Ar na chur a gcló ré Eleanor Ebheriongham, ag na seachd Realt a Sráid Abhe Máiria, 1712.

⁴⁹ [upper title] *A Catechism, That is to say, An Instruction to be Learned of every Person, before he be brought to be Confirmed by the Bishop. To which are prefixed Brief and Plain Rules For reading the Irish language. London, Printed by E. Everingham, at the Seven Stars in Ave-Mary-Lane near Ludgate.*

[lower title] *Teagasg-Criosdaighe, eadhon léighean is cóir do gach uile phearsóinn do fhogluim, sul béarfáir é chum a chomhdhaingnidh ré heasboc. Maille re Riaghlachaibh athchoimire, agus sothuigse chum na Teanga*

which the English text is also provided),⁵⁰ all three of which include his ‘Elements of the Irish Language’. The ‘Elements’ are placed towards the beginning in the catechisms and at the end of the Book of Common Prayer. On the title-page of the 1712 *Church Catechism Explain’d*, he refers to these ‘Elements’ as ‘Brief and Plain rules for reading the Irish language’, phrasing which recalls Daniel’s 1652 manual, with which Richardson was evidently familiar.

The ‘Elements’ is divided into three numbered sections, the first ‘Of the Letters’, the second ‘Of the Vowels, Diphthongs, and Triphthongs’, and the third ‘Of the Consonants’. The first section begins with a table of eighteen Irish letters. The Irish letter-names are given, followed by their ‘figure’ and their pronunciation, which is indicated by an English letter and sometimes by additional information: for example, Irish <a> is to be pronounced as <a> ‘Lat. or Fr.’, but ‘g’ is to be pronounced as in ‘Gr[ee]k’. Presumably the comparison with Greek in the last item is meant to avoid a realisation of <g> as a post-alveolar /dʒ/ (as in English ‘huge’ or in contemporary Latin *regina*). In the case of one letter (Irish <u>), the English character <u> is given as its pronunciation followed by ‘oo Eng.’

In the second numbered section, the vowels are subdivided into broad and slender from which thirteen ‘diphthongs’ and five ‘triphthongs’ can be formed. The thirteen ‘diphthongs’ have been met with already in the 1680 catechism, but Richardson has the full complement. Richardson quotes the quatrain beginning *Ceithre hamharchuill ríomhtar ann* first printed in Daniel’s rules and he then gives examples of the traditional classes of vowel digraphs with the addition of English names: *amharchuill* are ‘Apthongs’, *Eabha* ‘Ephthongs’, *Ifíne* ‘Iphthongs’, *Oir* is an ‘Ophthong’, and the three *Uilleanna* become ‘Upthongs’. The English names for these vowel-graph classes are found later in Mac Curtin’s Grammar (1728: 21–2), borrowed (without acknowledgement) from Francis Walsh’s English-language Irish grammar of 1713 (see, for example, King’s Inn MS 24, p. 18), on which much of Mac Curtin’s *Elements* is based (Mac Aogáin 1968: xv–xvi). Under each category Richardson gives the number of digraphs and trigraphs. <ao> gives him pause: ‘This Diphthong is always long, and hath a peculiar sound not used in any other Language that I know; which may be learned by

Gaoidheilge do léaghadh. A Lunnduin, Ar na chur a gcló ré E. Ebheriongham, ag na seacht Realt a Sráid-Abhé-Máiria.

⁵⁰ *Leabhar na Nornaightheadh Ccomhchoitchionn, agus mhiniostalachda na sacraimeinteadh, agus Reachtadh agus Dheasghnáth oile na Neaglaise, Do réir usáide Eaglaise na Sacsan; Maille ris an Tsaltair no Psalmuibh Dhaibhidh. Ar na Bpunchadh mur Cantar no raidhtior iad a Tteampollaibh. A Lunnduin: Ar na chur a gcló ré E. Ebheriongham, ag na seacht Realt a Sráid-Abhé-Máiria, [1712].*

the Ear'. In the Irish of north-west Co. Cavan as recorded in the early twentieth century, <ao> was normally pronounced /i:/ (sometimes /e:/) (Ó Tuathail 1934: 1–2), which could hardly have given Richardson so much trouble; he may have been referring to the pronunciation /ɛ:/, which was recorded in his native Co. Tyrone in the twentieth century (O'Rahilly 1932: 27; Stockman and Wagner 1965: 183).⁵¹

The section on vowels concludes with three notes. The first describes an orthographical feature that has become general in Modern Irish: '1. Note, That these Dipthongs *ae, ao, eo, eu, ia*, and all Triphthongs are long, and therefore need not be marked with an acute in Writing or print'. The second note makes clear that two or three vowel-graphs together are not to be pronounced with hiatus: '2. Note, That all Vowels coming together without a consonant interposing, make but one Syllable'. The third concerns the 'accent' (that is, the length-mark).

The section on consonants begins:

The Consonants when they are single, have the same force in Irish, as in English: only *c* is always pronounced as *k*; and *s* before *e* or *i* is pronounced as *sh*; but before *a, o, u* it hath the same power with an English *s*.

<cc> is said to be pronounced like <g>; <tt> as <t>; and <nd> as <n>. 'Likewise, when *d* is placed before *l*, it hath the force of another *l*; and *ln* are read as two *lls*, e.g. *codlah*, to Sleep, is read as *collah*; and *colna*, of the Body, as *colla*'.

The description of <ng> *Niatul* is similar to that in Daniel's rules but whereas Daniel confined the pronunciation in question to <ng> in initial position, Richardson's example allows it internally also: '*ng*, called *Niatul* in Irish, is for the most part pronounced as *γγ* in the Greek; so *Aingeal*, is pronounced as *αγγελ*.' The difference between Daniel's and Richardson's rules here presumably reflects variation between Daniel's likely Leinster dialect, which (in most cases in any event) on his evidence rendered <ng> as something like /ŋg/ as against Richardson's Ulster dialect, in which no plosive would be heard.

Richardson now turns to lenition. Indulging in some linguistic ethnography, he opines, 'The Irish do not delight much in Consonants, and therefore *h* is frequently added to *b, c, d, f, g, m, p, s, t*, to soften the Language'. This reference to 'softening' is to be connected

⁵¹ Of course, it may be that the twentieth-century pronunciation of <ao(i)> in Glangevlin does not represent the pronunciation current in Richardson's day.

with the Irish term *séimhiughadh*. Initial and medial <bh> and <mh> ‘have the force of v Consonant’ but in final position ‘they, (and especially *mh*) are pronounced a little flatter, when they come after *a* or *e*’. For <ch> he makes no reference to Latin, giving only Greek <χ>. In his treatment of <dh> and <gh>, Richardson attempts to reconcile the sound-value given by Daniel (/h/) with that of the 1680 *Graimmeir* (an English <y>):

dh and *gh*, (which are often used indifferently for one another,) have sometimes in the beginning, and middle of a word, the force of y. and sometimes they have a pronunciation, which is better learned by the Ear, than any description that can be given of it. But always in the End, and commonly in the middle of a word, they are pronounced only as *h*.

<fh> is said to be silent, while <ph> is to be pronounced as in English. <sh> and <th> are to be pronounced as <h>, as in *shuil* and *thomas*.

The indebtedness to Daniel is particularly obvious in the discussion of nasalisation:

The variation of a word in Number, Case, or Tense, is very often indicated by adding a different Consonant to the Initial one; and then the Initial Consonant (called *litir shealbhui ghthe*, i, e the possessive Letter, because it possesseth the first place in the Nominative Case, or present Tense indicative) is quiescent, and the additional only pronounced; thus *pobul* in the Nominative, is altered into *bpobul* in the Ablative, the *p* not being pronounced: but the Initial or Possessive Letter is always written, to shed the Primitive, or Radix of the word.

Richardson concludes with some practical advice on the difficulties of mastering Irish pronunciation:

The greatest difficulty of Reading, or speaking Irish consists in pronouncing *dh*, *gh*, and the Diphthongs and Triphthongs aright; but this is readily attained by a little instruction by the Ear, and Practice; whereby the Pronunciation of the Language is rendered easy and agreeable, there being much use made of Vowels, and little of Consonants in it.

The ‘Elements’ then concludes with a list of ‘abbreviations’ used in the book (the Tironian *et*, the *air*-symbol, the dotted consonants, etc.).

While it is possible that Richardson hoped his ‘Elements’ might aid Irish preachers illiterate in their native language, it seems likely that he was in fact focusing on the needs of English-speaking clergymen like himself who wished to learn Irish so as to make use of the preaching and liturgical aids he was making available to them. He was in an excellent position to know their needs having himself learnt the language, and provides them with good practical advice on pronunciation (the treatment of <ng>, for instance) and reading more generally (the interchange of <dh> and <gh>, for example). Though he allows himself comparisons to English, Latin, French and Greek, he still struggles to accurately describe some details of Irish pronunciation (probably the dialect of Tyrone, possibly of Cavan).

Perhaps like Daniel, Richardson may have expected an English-speaking person unschooled in Irish to work his way through the rules first and then use the published translations to make further headway in mastering the language. In his edition of the Book of Common Prayer, Richardson gives part of the liturgy in both English and Irish; for the rest (the epistles, gospels and psalms), his readers would have had easy access to the English text. Though the 1711 collection of sermons does not contain a guide to reading Irish beyond the few symbols and contractions explained at the back of the book, one wonders whether the decision to translate sermons was meant to facilitate the learning of Irish by English-speakers in the same way, though on that occasion – for reasons unclear to me – the English was not printed.

Hutchinson’s catechism

Like Richardson, Francis Hutchinson, Anglican bishop of Down and Connor, was not a native speaker of Irish, but unlike Richardson he never approached fluency in the language. He was born in England, in Derbyshire, in 1660. His 1722 bilingual catechism (in which the Irish and English are presented in parallel columns) is connected with his attempt to convert the population of Rathlin Island and the charity school there.⁵² In that work he introduced a simplified spelling system for Irish based on his own revision of English orthography, which he justifies in the preface (sig. A2, B2).⁵³ For Hutchinson, Irish letters were an encumbrance

⁵² *The Church Catechism in Irish, with the English placed over against it in the same Karakter. Together with prayers for sick persons, and some texts of scripture, and a vocabulary explaining the Irish words that are used in them. Belfast: Printed by James Blow, 1722.*

⁵³ For the Rathlin Catechism, its language and orthography, see Ó Dochartaigh 1976.

for they are really the same that ours were about a 11 hundred Years agoe, before length of Time and PRINTING had given them a smother and plainer Turn; but passing over that, I will only say, that Time and want of Use, hath made them unknown; that to us now, they are almost as hard to be learn'd, as Greek or Hebrew or any other new Alphabet wou'd be. (p. [iv])

He identifies a shortage of letters ('*h* in its proper sound', <k>, 'i Consonant', <v>, <w>, <x>, <y> and <z>) as a difficulty of the Irish spelling system, adding 'for want of these eight Letters they are forced to mingle and blend the others, and confound all Readers'. His examples of this 'blending' almost approaches a guide to reading the historical orthography of Irish, but it displays a strange conception of the relationship between speech and spelling: Hutchinson apparently believed, for example, that Irish *fíon* had an *f*- rather than a *w*- in pronunciation for want of the character <w> in writing. He rails against 'Quiescents':

To convince me of the inconvenient Length, and great number of Quiescents that this occasions, two Clergymen who have it for their Native Tongue, and are chief in making this Traduction of Character that is here presented, chose out the 6th Word in the Table of the Church-Catechism, as it stands already in the common Character; the word is, *ionfhoghlomtha* to be learned, which is spoken only *inoloma*; fourteen Letters, and seven of them Quiescents. (pp. [v-vi])

He continues with other examples of his own.

Later in the preface, he refers to the church's official policy towards Irish as defence for his own language-activism and which is worth quoting for the insight it gives us into how he expected his book might be used:

The 8th Canon requires, that where the greatest part of the People are Irish, the Confession, Absolution, and the Communion-Service, as far as the Sermon, should be read in English first, and then in Irish. And the 86th Canon requires, that where the Minister cannot read Irish, he shall endeavour to get a Clerk that can [...] And tho' these Canons and Acts of Parliament are not design'd to perpetuate the Irish Language, but only to bring in the English, by mingling a little Irish, where needful, with it; yet as they show that for the Salvation of the Mens Souls, some little Irish ought to be used, where the greatest part of the People are Irish: And as this common Character, in which we have written the Irish, serves for all the Languages in Europe,

we have placed the two Columns, as you see them, and hope that the Irish, which the Children do know, will help them a little to the Understanding of the English, which we wou'd teach them. (p. [ix])

He further defends his enterprise against the charge that 'the Natives are fond of their old Character': Hutchinson counters that it is far from clear whether 'the Natives, have really any Fondness for it', as '[t]here is not One in twenty thousand of 'em that can read it, or knows any thing of it' and that '[t]here is not one Popish School in all Ireland that teaches it' (p. [x]).

Hutchinson sets out the changes he has made to Irish orthography further on in the preface. He does away with the old letter-names 'calling a Ailim, b Beith, c Koll [...]', preferring 'plainly, a, bee, c, dee, e ef, &c' (p. [xi]); rejects the Irish type, which he claims 'is nothing but the Anglo-Saxonic'; supplies the eight letters he identifies as missing from Irish spelling; and abolishes 'Quiescents' (p. [xii]).

On p. [xiv] he finally introduces 'The Raghlin Alphabet' ('a a A', 'b b bee', etc.) with some guides to pronunciation ('c che as in *Charity*, *Chalice*, *Charles*'). There are two <g> (one for 'g ghee' and the other 'j jee') and two <y> (one for 'i long' and another 'kalled yi, yi, o, u, you, yi, o, k, e, yoke'). On p. [xv], he defends some points of the alphabet, including the inclusion there of letters ultimately not used in the catechism. He is aware that he may face complaints from 'the Highlands' and elsewhere about the values assigned to particular letters. There are no further instructions in reading Irish, the phonetic spelling system being designed to make further instruction unnecessary.

After the religious material itself, there is a vocabulary, the preface of which is made up of 'some few Grammatical Observations' (pp. 30–5) based on the foregoing Irish text. Though not strictly concerned with reading Irish and not germane to the Rathlin project, these observations are an illustration of the limits of parallel-text translations as a means of acquiring a good grounding in the grammar and syntax of the language and, as this procedure has been mentioned above in connection with Daniel and Richardson, it may be worthwhile briefly summarising Hutchinson's observations. While one can admire some of his insights under the circumstances, the 'Grammatical Observations' are clearly the work of an external observer who is far from fluency in the language.

On nouns, Hutchinson write, 'I beleev almost all, hav an Accusativ and other Oblique Cases in both Numbers, and make the necessary Changes of them various Ways'. He gives

some examples drawn ‘from the preceding Essay’ owing to ‘[t]he Defect of their Grammars’ (pp. 30–1). He attempts from this to synthesise some observations on the formation of plurals and the morphology of cases (p. 31). There may be an echo of Richardson here, for Hutchinson writes of initial mutations that they ‘not only serve to distinguish Cases, but soften the Langwage’. Hutchinson makes a few superficial remarks about gender before turning to adjectival suffixes (‘*a*, *ha*, or *he*’, i.e. *-dha/tha/the*, etc.) (pp. 31–2). He approves of the syntax of the attributive adjective in Irish: ‘And it is to be Noted that in Construction, they are usually placed after the Substantives; and it seems most proper that they should be so: For the Thing it self shou’d first be Named, and then its Quality or Karakter’. On ‘Substantives’ he can do no more than observe that they ‘often end in *Heahd* or *ghd* or *chd*’, that words for professions often end ‘in *oir*’. On degrees of comparison, he equates the comparative with ‘nas’ and the superlative with ‘ro’ (p. 33). The pronouns defeat his powers of analysis (‘The Pronouns are not easy to be reduced to Rule’) and words which he identifies as pronouns on the basis of their rendering pronouns in the English text are presented in a chaotic list. The paucity of Hutchinson’s Irish is apparent when he writes ‘As Articles are borrowed of the Pronouns I may take Notice here that as yet I find nothing about Articles, saving that *an* stands for *the*: As *an fear* the Man’. On p. 34 he gives ‘Auxiliary verbs [sic]’ beginning ‘*Taim ataim* I am / *Ata* which art’, which is followed by the ‘Imperative Mood’ (which includes ‘*Biodh an* let there be’), ‘Infinitiv Mood’ and ‘Participle’ (which besides ‘*veith* Being’ has ‘*Bea* livelyhood’ and other unrelated words). In concluding his observations, Hutchinson writes, ‘it appears plain to me, that the Irish Language is not a Contemptible Language, but such as the Inhabitants shou’d desire to see improved, and written, and printed as other Langwages are’.

1738 Doway Catechism

A bilingual Catholic catechism printed in Dublin in roman characters in 1738⁵⁴ contains a two-page guide headed ‘A few Instructions for reading the Irish Language’ at the end of the book (pp. 98–9). It gives seventeen letters, stating that <q> and <k> are used only for abbreviations, then subdivides them into vowels and consonants, and the former are further subdivided into ‘Diphthongs’ and ‘Triphthongs’. (Strictly-speaking, of course, this is not a subdivision of the alphabet. Note that the vowels are not subdivided into broad and slender.) The digraphs and trigraphs are given according to their first letter (‘there are four

⁵⁴ *The Doway Catechism, in English and Irish. For the use of children and ignorant people. [Mc 10:14]. Dublin: Printed by Henry Babe, at the Yellow Lyon in St Thomas’s-street, 1738.*

beginning with the Letter A’); their length is stated and some examples are given. Once again <eo> is given as long only. Besides indications of their length, no advice is given on how to pronounce them.

Beneath the heading ‘Of the Consonants’, the twelve consonants are given. The Protestant Richardson is clearly being copied here: whole sentences are taken over from his ‘Elements’. There are some minor changes: besides ‘two c’s’ (i.e. <cc>) and ‘two tt’s’ mention is also made of <gc> and <dt>. The discussion of <dh> and <gh> is slightly modified: ‘Dh and gh, (which are often used indifferently for one another) have sometimes in the beginning and middle of a Word, the Force of y, but always in the End of a Word or Syllable, they have no Force: as gradh, gra; brigh, bri.’ The discussion of ‘the possessive Letter’ is clearly from Richardson but simplified and abbreviated. Similarly, the final sentence is a mere re-wording of the conclusion of Richardson’s ‘Elements’: ‘The greatest Difficulty in reading the Irish, consists in pronouncing. Dh, gh, and the Dipthongs and Triphthongs aright; but this is readily attained by a little Instruction by the Ear and Practice’.

It is notable that less practical advice is given in the 1738 Doway Catechism than in Richardson’s ‘Elements’. One may wonder whether both books really had similar users in mind (English-speakers learning Irish) or whether the editor-translator of the 1738 Doway Catechism unthinkingly adopted Richardson’s guide without making appropriate adaptations. The 1738 Doway Catechism was designed for use by the clergy and people of Killaloe (‘In Usus Cleri et Populi Laonen: S. L.’, p. 97), hence it is often known as the ‘Killaloe Catechism’. In such a context it seems more likely that the manual on reading was designed for the use of those who could read English but not their native Irish, as the diocese of Killaloe would have been overwhelmingly Irish-speaking in this period.⁵⁵ Note that the title-page declares that the Catechism is for the use of ‘children and ignorant people’ (the usual stated audience in works of this kind). For them the ‘Instructions’ were added based on Richardson’s guide, but without making all the necessary modifications to adapt it for such an audience.

The guide was reprinted in the 1824 edition of the Doway Catechism, where it is associated with Gallagher’s sermons and explicitly presented as a guide to teaching oneself to read Irish (see below).

⁵⁵ Reliable statistical information is not available for the period pre-1771 (see FitzGerald 1984), but there is no reason to doubt that a high proportion of the population of the diocese would have been Irish-speaking and many of them monoglots.

1742 Donlevy's Catechism

Andrew Donlevy, a catholic priest of Achonry diocese resident in Paris since 1710, published a substantial Irish catechism in 'the plainest and most obvious Irish' (to which he appended 'upon a second Thought' an English translation) in 1742 (pp. xxii, xxxix).⁵⁶ In seeking to overcome dialect differences Donlevy explains in footnotes to the Irish text 'certain words, which are not used in some cantons of the Kingdom'.⁵⁷ At the conclusion of the book, there are Donlevy's own 'Elements of the Irish Language', in English only (pp. 499–516). Richardson's 'Elements' were – perhaps surprisingly given the confessional difference – an obvious influence on Donlevy, who also made use of Mac Curtin's grammar (also titled *The Elements of the Irish Language*⁵⁸), which had been published in Louvain in 1728. Donlevy explicitly acknowledges the latter, but is silent about his indebtedness to the former, an indebtedness which sometimes includes the lifting of passages more or less word for word.

The headings in Donlevy's guide are the same as Richardson's 'Elements' and he presents his alphabet in a similar way, but adds some additional forms of the letter-names from the table in Mac Curtin's Grammar ('Coll, or Ceith', etc.) with some further

⁵⁶ [half-title] *An Teagasg Críosduidhe do réir ceasda agus freagartha*.

The Catechism, or Christian doctrine by way of Question and Answer.

[first title] *An Teagasg Críosduidhe do réir ceasda agus freagartha, air na tharruing go bunudhasach as bréithir hsoilléir Dé, agus as toibreachaibh fíorgh-lana oile. [. . .] A bPairís: Air na chur a gClódh re Seumus Guerin, ag San-Tomás ó Acuin, a Sráid Sain-Seum, 1742. Ré Cead an Rígh, agus re Déightheisd na nOllamhun re Diaghacht.*

[second title] *The Catechism, or Christian Doctrine by way of Question and Answer, Drawn chiefly from the express Word of God, and other pure sources. [. . .] Paris: Printed by James Guerin, at S. Thomas of Aquin's in S. James-street, 1742. With Approbation, and the King's Licence.*

⁵⁷ Elsewhere he makes further general remarks on dialect differences (p. 505).

⁵⁸ *The Elements of the Irish Language, grammatically explained in English in 14 chapters. By H. Mac Curtin. Printed at Lovain, by Martin van Overbeke, near the Halls. Anno 1728.*

[p. 97] *Suim bhunudhasach an Teaguisg Chriosdaidhe, a bpros agus a ndán. Maille re hoifig spioradálta an chreidmhigh gach laé; *7 lé huirnaighthibh caoindúthrachtacha eile roimh faóisidin <is> roimh chumaoineadh, agus nandiáigh. Farré clár na bpeacadh fhoghna roimh fhaoísidin. Ar na ttarrang agus ar na gcur a mach a nois ga nuadh lé S. D. Ar na chur a ccló a Labhán le Mairtín Uan Obhárbeic láimh ris na Halluidhe, 1728.*

pronunciation aids of his own: for ‘Ailim’ he gives ‘a Lat. or Fr.’ as does Richardson but adds ‘au Eng.’ and, for Richardson’s ‘g Gr.’ as a value of ‘Gort’, Donlevy has ‘g Greek, as in Finger’. The discussion of vowels is almost identical to that in Richardson, including the cited verse, but some of the examples given for the vocalic digraphs and trigraphs differ and there is much more information on pronunciation by comparison with English not found in Richardson: for example, <ae> is said to be always long ‘and sounds as (ai) or (ay) in English’, while <aoi> ‘sounds like (we) in Weed, Week, Weesel, &c’. On <ao> he paraphrases Richardson slightly: ‘This Diphthong is always long, and hath a peculiar Sound, which may be learned by the Ear, and not otherwise’ (p. 500). Donlevy recognises that <eo> is ‘generally long, but not always, as some have advanced’ (p. 501).⁵⁹ Noticeable too is his attempt to guide the reader as to the core of the vowel in the case of trigraphs: of <eoi> he writes ‘The Stress is upon the (o)’ (p. 501) and of <ivi> he remarks that it is ‘upon the (v)’.

The first three notes following his discussion of digraphs and trigraphs are re-worked from Richardson, but he adds five more. The first deals with compensatory vowel-lengthening before a lost <bh>, <dh>, <gh> and <mh> ‘either in the Beginning of Words of two Syllables, or in the Middle of Words of three or more Syllables’, giving the examples *ughdar*, *úmhal*, *bunúdhas*, *slíghe* and *croídhe*, which he says need not be marked by an accent as they are regularly long (pp. 402–3). (It is interesting to see *slíghe* and *croídhe* counted as disyllables here. Were they truly pronounced as such or is the label ‘disyllabic’ a fiction of orthography?) Similarly, he argues that ‘e, i, o by themselves, as it often happens, are always long, and therefore need no Accent’, given examples of ‘Particles’ such as *ca* (= *cá*), *fa* (= *fá*), *fo* (= *fó*) etc.,⁶⁰ and ‘all Words of one Syllable, ending with a, e, i, or u’, giving examples such as *me* (= *mé*), *tre* (= *tré*). He acknowledges, however, that this rule does not apply to *ba* or *ga* (which he prefers to spell *gath*), *a*, *na* ‘when it signifies neither (nor) nor (than)’ and the prepositional pronouns (‘the Relatives’) *d(h)e* and *d(h)i*. (One wonders whether the article *na* is meant here rather than the conjunction *ná*.) This rudimentary attempt at phonotactics was an influence on Scurry eighty years later (see ### below).

Donlevy’s sixth note concerns vowel variation, which he says occurs ‘when they are not long, nor have a full, clear and distinct Sound, especially in the Beginning and End of

⁵⁹ We have noted that <eo> is sometimes given as long only in these guides (###), but Donlevy probably had Mac Curtin (p. 21) in mind here.

⁶⁰ Elsewhere Donlevy says that the prepositions *fa* and *fo* are always long (p. 504).

Words’ (p. 503).⁶¹ This is an improvement on previous efforts to describe variation in the use of vowel-graphs in unstressed position. (By unclear vowels at the beginning of words, Donlevy no doubt had the likes of *a-mach*, *is-teach* etc. in mind.)

The seventh note is a long discussion of vowel-elision (pp. 503–7), which Donlevy calls ‘*Cadad*, or *báthadh guthuigheadh* (Drowning of Vowels, or Apostrophe)’.⁶² He defends representing orthographically the elision of the verbal particle *do* in *d’imigh*, for instance. He is aware that this is a departure from the usage of bardic poets, whom he speaks of as an extinct class of versifiers:

Poets, not the Ancient and skilful, who took Pains to render their Poems sententious and pithy without much Clipping, but the Modern Makers of Doggerel Rhymes and Ballads; to save Time and Labour, introduced the Custom of clipping and joining Words together, in order to fit them to the Measure of their Verse. (p. 504)

He points out that ‘Clipping’ is found in English and remarks (p. 506) that it is no surprise that the types of barbarisms one finds in English should also appear in Irish especially as Irish is ‘a Language of neither Court, nor City, nor Bar, nor Business, ever since the Beginning of King James the First’s Reign’. After lamenting the decline of the Irish language and the neglect of its manuscripts (pp. 506–7), he explains the rule *Caol re Caol, agus Leathan re Leathan*, that is, small to small, and broad to broad’ at some length (pp. 507–8).

On p. 508 Donlevy turns to consonants. The first sentence echoes Richardson’s rule on the pronunciation of single consonants as in English, but his discussion of the *litir shealbhuighe* or ‘the Initial Root-Letter’ is more detailed (indeed, it is rather rambling). He also introduces for the first time into such a guide the term *leitir fhóghantach* or ‘The Servile Letter’, i.e. the letter prefixed to the *litir shealbhuighe*. He compares the use of ‘Servile or Auxiliary-Letters and Particles’ in Irish to Hebrew and acknowledges that they can ‘puzzle the unexperienced Reader’. The term ‘servile letter’ is used in Hebrew grammar (see *OED* s.v. ‘servile’) and I have no other example of the Irish *leitir fhóghantach*; it may be Donlevy’s own translation. As Donlevy understands ‘the sole End of Languages’ to be

⁶¹ This page is, in fact, numbered 403 in error in the printed book.

⁶² Vowel-elision is discussed in Mac Curtin (1728: 25), but not in the same detail. The term *cadad* (properly ‘de-lenition’) is used incorrectly by Donlevy. He may have been led astray by Mac Curtin’s definition of *cadad* as ‘Suppression’ (1728: 16), but Mac Curtin mentions that under the heading ‘Of the Influence of the Consonants upon each other’.

communication, he advocates for clarity's sake the use of a hyphen to distinguish the elements of compound words and that 'Servile Letters' be printed small (as in *ar nDia* and *ar nArán*), but owing to the inconsistency of his Paris printer he feels the need to set down a 'general Rule' that 'wheresoever, throughout this Volume, two Consonants are found in the Beginning of a Word, the first is Servile, and the only in Force' with some exceptions (<ng>, 'which have a peculiar mixed Sound' and <sc>, <sd>, <sg>, <sp> and <st>; consonant + <l>, <n> or <r>) (p. 509). This is the clearest formulation to date of a (potentially) convenient rule for pronunciation of initial consonant clusters first propounded in Daniel, here transmitted through Richardson and improved by Donlevy.

The rest of the 'Elements' is made up of observations on the consonants. There are echoes of Richardson here again, as in the observation 'That the Irish do not delight much in hard Consonants' and so add <h> 'to soften the Language, and sometimes denote Gender too' (p. 510) or his example of the pronunciation of <dl> and <ln> (p. 514). Both <gc> and <cc> are mentioned, and the discussion of <ch> marks an improvement on previous attempts in such guides: it is 'read as the Spanish (J) Consonant, as the Greek χ; Save only, that when it comes after any of the broad Vowels a, o, u, it is somewhat more guttural, more in the Throat than (sought)' (p. 511).⁶³ Similarly, the guide to pronouncing <d> is more detailed: it 'has a thick soft Sound, as (th) in thither' (p. 511). Similar remarks are made about <t> (p. 515). (In neither case is a distinction made between broad and slender.) Particularly interesting is the observation that 'even in Composition' the <d> of <nd> is pronounced 'like an (n)' (e.g. in *ceann-dána*) 'throughout the far greater Part of the Kingdom' (pp. 511–12); this suggests that in some dialects assimilation of *nd* no longer took place at the juncture of two elements of a compound by this period.⁶⁴ Variation in the second possessive pronoun before a vowel (*t'* or *th'*) is noted, though Donlevy is unsure of the correctness of these short aspirated forms of *do* (pp. 512–13).⁶⁵ The discussion of *Niatal* is rather confusingly worded: they 'have almost the same Force, in the Beginning, Middle and End of Words, with (ng) in *wrangling*, *mingling*, *bungling*; and the very same Force with *yy* in the Greek.'

Donlevy's remarks on the distinction between <l> and <ll> are worth quoting in full:

⁶³ This is the only reference to Spanish in such a guide that I have noticed. Mac Curtin (1728: 15) mentions English 'Fought' in his discussion of <ch>.

⁶⁴ In Classical Modern Irish poetry, *-n(n) + d-* normally assimilate to *-nn-*, though the adjectival ending *-d(h)a* can resist assimilation (McManus 2014: 219–22).

⁶⁵ Only *th'* is given in Mac Curtin (1728: 25).

That an *l* [...] is pronounced, when doubled, soft and thick as the two (*ll*'s) in *Collier*, (*l*) in *valiant*, and (*ld*) in *Soldier*: And even a single *l*, has often the Force of two *ll*'s, in the Beginning of Words; but not always, as some have advanced; for Instance, *a lámh* (her Hand) *a lámh*, (his Hand), the *l* is pronounced in the first, as if it were double; but not so, in the latter Example.

The claim that initial <l> was always pronounced as if double is found in Mac Curtin's *Elements* (p. 15). Similar observations are made on <n> and <nn> (pp. 514–15) and the distinction between non-lenited and lenited initial <n> after the possessive pronouns *a* 'her' and *a* 'his' respectively. Of <r> he writes:

A single *r* also has the same Force [i.e. it is double] often in the Beginning of Words: For Instance, *an Rígh*, (the King); *mo Rígh*, (my King): In the first, the *r* has the Force of two; but not in the latter. (p. 515)

(Despite the non-historical spelling, *rígh* is presumably nominative singular in the first example.) Of <mh> he writes that it 'commonly' sounds like '(v) Consonant' but somewhat 'more nasal, or in the Nose' and 'softer than (v) Consonant' (p. 514).

Donlevy concludes by recommending Mac Curtin's Grammar for '[s]uch as desire to get more Insight into the Grammar-Rules of this Language', and quotes (without acknowledgement) Richardson's concluding statement in his 'Elements' on the greatest difficulties of Irish pronunciation. A list of 'Irish Abbreviations used in this Book' finishes off these 'Elements'.

Donlevy expanded on Richardson's manual, particularly in relation to Irish phonology. The concern with the correct pronunciation of initial <l>, <n> and <r> represents a move away from a preoccupation with one-to-one correspondences of symbols and sounds (already found in embryonic form in Daniel) towards a fuller account of correct Irish pronunciation structured around orthography. The usefulness of Richardson's 'Elements' as a model is all the clearer bearing in mind that Donlevy had access to Mac Curtin's Grammar: in Richardson's 'Elements' Donlevy found a framework for a guide to reading Irish, which the more unwieldy, full-scale grammar of 1728 could not provide, but a tendency to prolixity may have been encouraged by the example of the larger grammatical work. Some of Donlevy's socio-linguistic observations (see the discussion of vowel-elision) undoubtedly delay and distract from practical guidelines to reading Irish, but he was writing for an

audience who had Irish but might not be able to read it and his asides on the history and status of the Irish language were perhaps calculated to motivate users illiterate in Irish to make the effort required to further the cause of the language by mastering its written form. It is perhaps telling that, when John McEncroe prepared a new edition of Donlevy (seen through the press by Edward O'Reilly in 1822), he added his own, briefer 'compendium of Irish grammar' (see below). Indeed, the brief manual is the form followed in all future catholic catechisms; this may reflect the unwieldiness of Donlevy's treatment, but also the increasingly local and dialectal turn taken in the production of catechisms.

1748 catechism

James Pulleine's catechism published in 1748⁶⁶ did not aspire to be a work of national relevance like Donlevy's large catechism with its footnotes on dialectal forms and its wide-ranging guide to reading Irish; the work of the titular Dean of Dromore, it is a brief and dialectal work. The preface addresses – among other topics – the duty to teach and learn the catechism (pp. iii–v). The 'Brief Rules for reading this little Book, which will also serve for any other in the Irish Tongue' at the end of the book (pp. 34–6) are concise and simple. There are no digressions or complex terminology, but the concision and simplicity inevitably leads also to vagueness. Under the heading 'Of Vowels', it begins 'Note that, *a*, *o*, *u*, are broad and flat, *e* and *i* are sharp and small. The letter *h* along with any other consonant softens, or totally silences its sound'. Obviously the user is expected to read English, but what is he or she to make of such vague terms as 'broad and flat' or 'sharp and small'? A certain lack of organisation is clear too in the inclusion of the vague discussion of lenition under the heading 'Of Vowels'.

After these initial statements but without any further heading, individual letters or letter-combinations are introduced and some guide is given to their pronunciation:

a Sounds flat, like *a*.

b Sounds as *beh*.

bh like *v* consonant. Exam. Mo-bhrigh, *my Strength*.

bp as *b* alone. Ex. air bpeacadh, as if written air beacadh, *our sin*.

⁶⁶ *An Teagasg Criosdaidhe Angoidhleig. Air na chur a gcló ré cead na nuachdran, 1748*. Reprinted in 1782 with the author's name and office.

The attempt to describe the pronunciation of <ch> is unsatisfactory: ‘Ch as *ch* in this word, *Chirurgery*, or the greek letter *chi*.’ <g> ‘sounds *geh*’. There is none of the phonological information to be found in some earlier guides, such as distinctions between double and single <l> or indications of nasality or a difference in the pronunciation of English and Irish <t>. These omissions are no doubt intentional, as it appears from the concluding paragraph that the rules were for use by (or in instructing) students in reading the catechism:

These short rules are easy and useful for the young reader; what other difficulties occur in this language will sooner be attained by the ear and practice than any method. And when thus far improved, consult Macurtin’s, or Mulloy’s late Irish grammar. (p. 36)⁶⁷

In this paragraph we may have a slight echo of Richardson and his emulators, as perhaps also in some of the values given for individual letters.

1791 St Patrick’s Hymn

In 1791, Richard Plunket (fl. 1772–91) of Co. Meath⁶⁸ published in Dublin an edition of the Old Irish poem *Génair Pátraic i nNemthur* with his own rendering into Modern Irish.⁶⁹ After his translation he presents ‘Short directions for reading Irish intended for those who can speak and understand the language’ (pp. 27–30). This is the first instance of a guide to

⁶⁷ ‘Mulloy’s late Irish grammar’ refers to *Grammatica Latino-Hibernica, nunc compendiata, authore Rev. P. Fr. Francisco O Molloy, Ord. Min. Strict. Observantiae in Collegio S. Isidori S. Theol. Professore primario, Lectore iubilato, et provinciae Hiberniae in Curia Romana agente generali. Romae: Ex typographia S. Cong. de Propag. Fide, 1677.*

⁶⁸ For Plunket, his life and works, see Sharpe 2007.

⁶⁹ [first titles, verso] *An Hymn, on the Life of St Patrick: extracted from the ancient Scytho-Celtic dialect into Modern Irish, by Richard Plunket, late translator of the New Testament into Irish, who has now the manuscript in his possession* (Dublin, 1791). [recto] *Himhin Phadruig absdal. Do cumadh re Feiche easbug Shleibhte a gCondae na Banrioghna, disciobal agus fear comhaimsire do Phadraig fein. Air na mhineadh go deighneach san Nuaghaidhilig, Re Riostard Pluncead. A mBeulathecliath: ar na chur a gclo san mbliadhain 1791.*

[second titles, verso] *An Hymn on the Life of St Bridget, extracted from the ancient Scytho-Celtic dialect into Modern Irish, by Richard Plunket, late translator of the New Testament into Irish, who has now the manuscript in his possession* (Dublin, 1791). [recto] *Himhin ar bheartaibh agus ar mhiorbhuilibh Naoimh Brighide, noch do cumadh re Brogain Naomhtha, a naimsir Lughaidhe mhic Laoghaire airdrigh Eirean, agus Alild mhic Dunlaing righ Laigheann, ar na mhineadh a Nuadhghaidhilig na haimsirese. Re Riostard Pluncead. A mBeulathcliath: ar na chur a gclo san mbliadhain 1791.*

reading Irish outside of a work of catechesis or sermonising. While there is still some religious connection, it is better to regard this guide as the first published in a literary context. It is printed with a separate title-page and imprint (p. 27), but the pagination of the directions themselves (pp. 29–30) is continuous with the rest of the work. In the context, it was probably designed simply to aid in reading the author’s own translation, but may have been conceived with more general utility in mind also.

Plunket gives the seventeen letters of the alphabet, subdivides them into consonants and notes that nine are ‘aspirated or mutable’. He observes that <h> is more than a mere mark of aspiration, however, and can be prefixed to vowels, giving the example *na hinnis sin damhsa* – a departure from accepted orthodoxy followed by Scurry (see ### below). Plunket then proceeds to give the sounds of the ‘mutable Consonants’ with examples in Irish, often followed by a more phonetic rendering (pp. 29–30). For <ch> he gives ‘the Greek chi’ and for <dh> and <gh> ‘the sound of y’ (no distinction is made between broad and slender). He states that <ph> ‘sounds as f, or phi in Greek’ (p. 30) – the first instance I have noted of a Greek comparison for this graph. Of <l>, <n> and <r>, he says that they are ‘hard or immutable’ and ‘never lose their Sounds’, which may suggest that he did not distinguish between initial lenited and unlenited *l*, *n* and *r*. He comes then to discuss the *litir shealbhuighthe*, but makes no use of Irish terminology:

A Consonant prefixed to another in the beginning of words for the most part retains it’s own Sound, but the subsequent or radical Consonant is quite extinct, Ex. ar mbaràmhail, pro ar maravail, our opinion, ar ndùil, pro. ar nuil, our hope, air a tsiàh, pro. ar a tliav, on the mountain.

But he does give the Irish term *Niatal* for <ng>. Echoing the wording of Richardson (though applied by Richardson to <dh> and <gh>), Plunket says that it ‘has particular Sound, which is better learned by the ear, than by any definition that can be given of it’.⁷⁰ (This statement applies only to nasalised *g*- and is not an indication of Plunket’s pronunciation of medial or final <ng>.) He notes that <cc> and <tt> are sometimes used for <gc> and <dt>.

⁷⁰ This observation is taken up by Edward O’Reilly in his grammar of Irish (*Sanas Gaoidhilde–Sagsbhearla. An Irish–English Dictionary, containing upwards of twenty thousand words that have never appeared in any former Irish lexicon: with copious quotations from the most esteemed ancient and modern writers, to elucidate the meaning of obscure words; [. . .] By Edward O’Reilly. Dublin: Printed by John Barlow 26, Bolton-Street, 1817*) at p. 3. O’Reilly was aware of Plunket’s work (see Sharpe 2017).

Plunket then turns to the vowels, which he subdivides into ‘broad’ and ‘small’. He notes vowel-variation, but does not distinguish between purely orthographical variation in the representation of schwa on the one hand and phonological variation on the other (Umlaut): he gives as examples of vowel-variation ‘bolsaire, bolsoire or bolsuire, a cryer’, which illustrates mere orthographic variation, and ‘an ceann, no cion, the head’, where *cionn* (originally dative) is a variant form of *ceann*.⁷¹ He neither lists the ‘diphthongs’ and ‘triphthongs’ nor attempts to give any guidance on their pronunciation, beyond the statement that their ‘different Accents are easily learned by Practice’. This leads him to observe:

Any of my Countrymen, though advanced in Year, who has a tolerable notion of Letters, and can speak and understand his native Language, may easily read it, by the help of these few Directions, and a little Application.

He concludes with two lines from Horace *Viva Vale, si quid novisti rectius istis, / Candidus imperti, si non, his utere mecum*, which he renders into Irish.

On his own authority it is clear that Plunket designed his ‘Short directions’ for native speakers and so he could trust that with ‘a little Application’ they would come to be able to read the language, but he could not – or was unwilling – to provide them with detailed descriptions of the pronunciation of those graphs most likely to give even native speakers difficulty (such as <ao>). His statement that <ng> is ‘better learned by the ear’ seems oddly-worded given that he was directing this guide at native speakers and may reflect his indebtedness to guides directed at non-native speakers, but one could argue that Plunket meant no more than he could not describe it accurately in writing.

1795 True Wisdom

In 1795, an Irish translation of an English version of Segnary’s *La Vera Sapienza* was published in Cork.⁷² Both the Irish and the English text on which it is based are given. The

⁷¹ Presumably nom. *cionn* was a variant of *ceann* in the Irish of Co. Meath. Nom. *cionn* is met with in Ulster Irish (*SnaG* 633).

⁷² [verso] *True Wisdom; or, Considerations for every day of the week. Written in Italian, by the pious and learned Father F. Paul Segnary, of the Society of Jesus, and late Preacher to Pope Innocent XII. With an appendix of what is necessary for a good Confession and Communion. With approbation and permission. Cork: Printed by John Connor, Circulating Library, Castle-street, 1795.*

[recto] *Eagna fhirinneach: no, Smaointighthe do gach la do’n tseachdmhuin. Air na Sgriobhadh ann Iodallais, leis an oide bhfoghlamtha, ccrabhadh, iodhon, an tAthair Proinsias Paul Segnary, aon do Chomhluadar Uird*

translator, Seaghan O’Connuill (Seán Máistir Ó Conaill of Cill na Martra, Co. Cork),⁷³ begins his address to the reader as follows:

As being confidently assured that the following Translation could not but inevitably fall into the hands of many, who may be utter strangers to Irish; I therefore, thought it requisite to insert the following Remarks, that such as should be so far deficient, may read it with the greater facility. (p. vii)

The concluding remarks of his guide (see ### below) appear to confirm that he had in mind learners of the language rather than native speakers illiterate in Irish.

O’Connuill’s guide is rather discursive, lacking the bullet point-like succinctness of some other accounts. He states that there are seventeen letters ‘exclusive of the aspirate *h*, called by some of our Irish Grammarians, *uath*, and by others *uathamh*, from the white-thorn tree’, and these seventeen are said to be divided into consonants and vowels, the latter subdivided further into ‘broad or *leathan*’ and ‘small or *caol*’. He quotes from ‘a certain author’ the ‘distich’ *Leathan le leathan, is caol le caol, / Is leo do sgriobhtar focuil an tsaoghuil*, before noting that ‘a modern author declares this to be an abusive rule’. I do not know the source of this couplet, but the rule is declared to be ‘abusive’ several times in Bishop O’Brien’s *Focalóir* of 1763 (see, for example, p. 14), whence O’Connuill also sources the etymologies of the letter-names.⁷⁴ One may note that he has slightly improved on O’Brien’s *Focalóir* (p. 293) by adding *uathamh* (more historical *uathadh* ‘lenition’) to *uath* as a letter-name for <h>.

O’Connuill proceeds to give an account of the individual vowels in alphabetical order, noting whether they are broad or slender, giving a traditional letter-name and sometimes a

Iosa, agus Seanmoirighe deighionach do’n Phapa, iodhon, an Dara Innocent Deag. Mar aon le miniughadh air na neithibh a ta riachdanach chum Deagh-Fhaoisidine, agus Deagh-Chumaoine. Le molla, agus le ceadughadh. Air n’athrughadh o Bheurla go Gaoidhlge, le Seaghan O’Connuill, ag seipeal Thuath na Dromun, an dara la do mhiosa na Bealltuine, an san Mbliaghain d’aois Chríost, 1795.

⁷³ For Seán Ó Conaill, see Murphy 2009. For the translation, see Ó hÉigeartha 2013, where bizarrely a manuscript copy of the 1813 reprint of Ó Conaill’s translation is cited in lieu of the printed text.

⁷⁴ *Focalóir Gaoidhilge–Sax-bhéarla, or An Irish–English Dictionary: Whereof the Irish part hath been compiled not only from various Irish vocabularies, particularly that of Mr Edward Lhuyd; but also from a great variety of the best Irish manuscripts now extant; especially those that have been composed from the 9th & 10th centuries, down to the 16th; besides those of the lives of St Patrick & St Brigit, written in the 6th & 7th centuries. Paris: Printed by Nicolas-Francis Valleyre, for the Author, 1768. By Royal Approbation & Privilege.*

key to pronunciation: ‘The letter *a*, being the first of the Irish alphabet, sounds broad, like *aw* in English, and is distinguished by the appellative of *ailim*, which seems to signify strictly and properly the palm tree’ (p. viii). This is an adaptation from the *Focalóir* (p. j), but with the addition of the English equivalent. <e> is *eabha* or *eadha* (‘the aspin tree, commonly called *crann criothach*’). <o> is ‘ranked amongst the flat vowels’ but the Irish for these vowels is given as *consoineadha leathana*! It ‘derives its origin from the spindle tree, *feorus*, and is the leading vowel of the diphthong called *oir na aonar*, the ophthong alone’. <u> ‘is originally called from heath, in Irish, *fraoch*; others will have it borrow it’s name from *ubhar*, the yew tree’ (an inaccurate paraphrase of the *Focalóir*, p. 499). All of the vowels are said to be either short or long, except <a> on the length of which no statement is made.

O’Connuill turns then to the consonants, which are twelve in number, divided into mutables and immutables. He notes that <l>, <n> and <r> are immutable, ‘so entitled from their never admitting of the least influence of the aspirate *h*’, but he qualifies this by noting that they are sometimes written doubled and doubled in speech if not in writing in certain positions: of lenited <l> he writes, ‘the letter *l*, or *luis*, is so called from *luis*, the quicken tree, *carthan*, this letter being the initial of a word, which has reference to the female sex, is pronounced double, though written single as *a lamh*, her hand, is pronounced *al lamh*, her hand’ (p. ix), all of which is lifted from O’Brien’s *Focalóir* (p. 312). *Niatal*, which produces ‘one joint sound’, is only mentioned as a phenomenon in word-initial position.

The nine mutable consonants are then discussed in alphabetical order and again letter-names are given (e.g. ‘*B*, or *beith*, so called from *both*, a house’).⁷⁵ He notes that lenition and nasalisation affect the meaning of *c*-initial words (‘in saying his head you must not say *a ceann*, his head, but *a cheann*’) (p. x), but all he says of pronunciation is that ‘[i]n the middle and end of a word in the Irish *ch* sound like *agh* or *ogh* in English, as *laogh*, a champion in Irish *laoch*; *Loghrae* in English; in Irish *Loch rae*’. <dh> is like English <y> in initial position, but

in the middle of words, [they] retain a dull and heavy sound, and partly correspond with the letter *g*, though the letter *g* is not introduced, but rather changed for a double *r* in the word majesty; *maordhacht*, sound *morracht*; *dh* also sound hard in *Diadha*, Divine, &c, and in concluding a word, are entirely lost.

⁷⁵ O’Brien compares first Hebrew *beth* (*Focalóir*, 35).

He notes that ‘by the course of speech’ <t>, <d>, <m> or <bh> can be prefixed to lenited <f>, so that *tíhear* is pronounced *tear* etc. (p. xi); this recalls Daniel’s treatment of proclitic elements like 2 sing. possessive *t’* and the reduced preposition *d’*, but is surely independent of it. <gh> is pronounced like English <y> in initial position, but ‘suppressed’ internally and finally. Under the consonants he generally treats of their lenited and nasalised forms but also their own function in nasalisation (so under <g> he mentions its use as a nasalising element on <c>).

After completing the alphabetical survey of the consonants, he mentions that ‘*n* and *d* sometimes join’ but gives only examples of initial nasalised <d> (and not word-final <nd>, for example). He notes also the assimilation of <ln> in *colna*. He then makes a ‘general remark’ that ‘when applied to the feminine gender’ the mutable consonants are ‘seldom or never aspirated’, as in *a brog* ‘her shoe’ (p. xii).

In his concluding remarks, he justifies the obvious omissions from his account:

Thus, dear Reader, have I given you an abridged idea of the nature of the Irish Alphabet, and would dwell longer on the subject, in distinctly expounding the nature of the accent, the diphthongs, triphthongs, aphthongs, ephthongs, &c. but, in my opinion, that such explanations should be reserved, or chiefly designed, for those only, who already conceive some notion of the elements of the Irish language, or that would wish in future to attain some knowledge thereof.

Another motive which induced me to be silent on that head, was, my being apprehensive that it may rather confound than help the memories of those who may be ignorant of the rudiments of the language, in the perusal of this Translation [...] (p. xiii)

O’Connuill can hardly have thought his guide would have been of much help to learners of the language. If he had any conception of its utility, it was to satisfy their curiosity. This is reflected in the space given over to etymologising and the silence on more thorny, practical issues of pronunciation. Nonetheless Ó Conaill’s rules managed – to my mind surprisingly – to impress John O’Donovan, who described them as ‘very correct’.⁷⁶

1800 Spiritual Rose

⁷⁶ *A Grammar of the Irish Language, published for the use of the senior classes in the College of St Columba. By John O’Donovan. Dublin: Hodges and Smith, Grafton Street, Booksellers to the University, 1845, p. lii.*

The *Spiritual Rose*, a collection of Catholic prayers and devotions prepared by Louthman Matthew Kennedy, was printed in Monaghan in 1800.⁷⁷ It concludes with two pages heading ‘Instructions for the Reader, shewing how to pronounce Words in the Irish Language’. Parts are difficult to read in the sole extant copy of the first edition (preserved in the RIA), but it appears that the ‘Instructions’ were carried over verbatim into the revised edition of 1825 (edited in McKenna 2001 with extensive linguistic notes). The nature of the guide itself and the fact that the *Spiritual Rose* is a monolingual Irish text suggest that these ‘Instructions’ were meant for Irish-speakers literate in English but not Irish.

Kennedy begins with the seventeen radical letters arranged in a table. The sound-values given are those of Pulleine’s Catechism, though the earlier work did not present them in a table and included also the mutated letters arranged in alphabetical sequence. Beside this alphabet he subdivides the alphabet into vowels and consonants, stating that <h> is ‘neither a vowel nor consonant, but an aspiration or breathing’ which ‘has power to either soften or aspirate any of the following consonants viz. b c d f g h p s t’. The sounds of these aspirated letters are then given with the exception of <gh>, which is apparently forgotten. The pronunciation <bh> and <dh> combined with each vowel is given (‘bha as va, bhe as ve, bhi as vee, bho as vo, bhu as vu’), but in the case of <mh> only the first in the sequence is given (‘mha as wa, &c.’). The statement that <ch> is ‘sounded as ch in English’ is ambiguous and refers presumably to the pronunciation of English ‘loch’ etc. in Hiberno-English.

For consonants that are nasalised (or have a prefixed *t*-), Kennedy writes only, ‘When two consonants come together in the Beginning of a word, it is the first is sounded, though the second be the possessive letter.’ This is an inadequate treatment, unless the reader is familiar with the term ‘possessive letter’; if he is not, the advice given would suggest *dlighe* is to be pronounced with initial *l*- or *scéal* with initial *c*-. (Contrast Donlevy’s more accurate formulation of this rule in 1742.) The term ‘possessive letter’ indicates that Kennedy was drawing on another source besides Pulleine’s Catechism in drawing up these instructions, perhaps the 1738 Doway Catechism. Finally, Kennedy explains that the Tironian *7 is ‘pronounced’ *agus*.

1810 Life of Saint Patrick

⁷⁷ *The Spiritual Rose, or, Method of saying the Rosaries of the Most Holy Name of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin with their Litanies; also the Meditations and Prayers adapted to The Holy Way of the Cross; [. . .] Rendered into Irish by Mathew Kennedy. By Permission. Monaghan: Printed by Robinson and Duffy, 1800.*

The anonymous *Life of Saint Patrick* published in Dublin in 1810⁷⁸ was the work of Patrick Lynch (1757–1818) of the Gaelic Society of Dublin.⁷⁹ His *Life* included Fiacc’s Hymn, following Colgan’s 1647 edition. He adds ‘Short directions for reading Irish’ (pp. 348–50) at the end of the book. He may perhaps have been influenced by Plunket’s edition (which did, however, include a Modern Irish translation). Plunket presumably hoped to reach a native Irish-speaking audience with his modern rendering of the Old Irish poem; in this context, Lynch’s guide probably aimed at no more than helping the curious sound out a text that they could hardly have understood without recourse to Colgan’s Latin translation or the English rendering of that translation. The association of this guide to reading Irish with an Old Irish text is a new context for such a manual.

The directions begins with tables illustrating vowels (Irish characters with English beneath; both <v> and <u> given for English <v>), ‘Abbreviations’ (including ligatures), consonants (Irish characters with English beneath) and ‘Mutable Consonants’ (dotted Irish characters above the radical letter + <h> above English values). The values given for the lenited consonants will come as no surprise (<bh> corresponds to English <v>, <dh> to English <y>, etc.), but <ch> is again given the value <χ>. <ch> is explained further in the first full sentence of the ‘Short directions’, where it is said to be ‘sounded like Greek χ, or *ch* in *loch*, among the Scots and Irish.’ The pronunciation of nasalised letters or <s> with a prefixed *t*- is explained in a table with examples given in standard spelling, in a more phonetic Irish spelling and finally in a phonetic English spelling (‘ar mbeul’, ‘ar meul’, ‘ar meul’) (p. 349). With the aid of numbers in the margin the Irish words are then explained.

Lynch continues:

The sounds of *l*, *n*, *r*, *é* or *ch*, and *ao* or *ae*, in Irish, can only be learnt by making a native pronounce the Irish words *lamh*, *neart*, *rígh*, *cean*, *caora*, with and without the article, corresponding with my, thy, his, her; as my, thy, his, her hand, strength, king, head, sheep &c.

⁷⁸ *The Life of Saint Patrick, Apostle of Ireland: to which is added, in the original Irish character, the celebrated Hymn, composed above 1200 years since, by his Disciple, Saint Fiech; comprehending a compendious history of his life. Annexed is a copious appendix, containing a summary account of the various ecclesiastical institutions [. . .] in Ireland, [. . .]; also a chronological table of the archbishops of Armagh, Dublin, Cashell and Tuam, from the death of Saint Patrick [. . .]. Together with an abstract of Irish grammar [. . .]. Dublin: Printed by H. Fitzpatrick, no. 4, Capel Street, printer and bookseller to the R. C. of Saint Patrick, Maynooth, 1810.*

⁷⁹ For Patrick Lynch, see Ó Casaide 1912.

The words for selection suggest a concern with the distinction between lenited and unlenited <l>, <n> and <r>, and further appear to indicate that the author did not distinguish between palatal and non-palatal varieties of these consonants, while he is alive to the need to distinguish between palatal and non-palatal <ch>.

The rest of the guide (pp. 349–50) is made up of declensions, giving firstly certain pronouns (the article is included here) in the nominative, genitive, dative and accusative (‘an’, ‘an’, ‘d-on’, ‘gan’ in the case of the singular article, ‘na’, ‘na’, ‘d’ona’, ‘gan’ in the case of the plural; ‘me’, ‘ma’, ‘d-amh’, ‘diom’ in the case of the 1 sing., ‘sin’, ‘ar’, ‘duin’ and ‘uain’ in the case of the 1 pl.), the declension of *fear*, *bean*, *cós* (recte *cos*), *crann* and *slighe*, and – to illustrate the attributive adjective – *cean maith* and *cailín suairc*. (It was surely a missed opportunity not to include a feminine noun qualified by an adjective.)

Lynch concludes: ‘Those who wish for a complete knowledge of the Irish Language, will find every information on that subject in the Rev. Doctor O’Brien’s Irish Grammar, lately published by the Printer hereof’. This advertisement for O’Brien’s Grammar, belatedly published in 1809,⁸⁰ notwithstanding, there is no obvious sign of its influence on Lynch; it was most likely included to satisfy the printer. Lynch’s paradigm of the article, for instance, or of the noun *cailín*, differ in important details from O’Brien’s treatment (see pp. 17, 24–5 of O’Brien’s *Practical Grammar*), and are more similar to those published in Vallancey’s ‘Iberno-Celtic’ grammar of 1773 (see pp. 37 and 69 of that work).⁸¹

1818 New Testament

As well as a glossary, this reprint of the 1810 McQuige printing of the Irish New Testament⁸² included on a single page *An Taibghitir* ‘The Alphabet’, which gave the Irish ‘figures’ (upper- and lower-case), their traditional letter-names and then the corresponding

⁸⁰ *A Practical Grammar of the Irish Language by the Rev. Paul O’Brien. Dublin: Printed by H. Fitzpatrick, 4 Capel Street, bookseller to the R.C. Coll. Maynooth, 1809.*

⁸¹ First published as *A Grammar of the Iberno-Celtic, or Irish language. By Major Charles Vallancey, Author of the Essay on the Antiquity of the Irish Language. Dublin: Printed by R. Marchbank, for G. Faulkner, T. Ewing, and R. Moncrieffe, 1773.* I am citing the second edition of 1782.

⁸² *An Tiomna Nuadh ar Dtighearna agus ar Slanuightheóra Iosa Criosd: air na tharruing go fírinneach as a Ngreigis ughdarach. Ris an tathair is onóruighthe a Ndía Uilliam O’Domhnuill, Aird Easpug Thuaim. London: Printed by Richard Watts, Crown Court, Temple Bar, for the British and Foreign Bible Society: and sold, to subscribers only, at the Society’s House, 10, Earl Street, Blackfriars, 1818.*

English letters, and a further table of ‘Contractions, Sounds, and Mute Letters’. This illustrated, for example, the *sed*-compendium, which ‘represents and sounds’ <chd> and in English characters also <chd>. <aé> is equated with <é>, English <e>. A dotted represents <bh> and ‘v or w’. The table was also used to explain consonantal elision, as in the pronunciation given for <df>, <dt>, etc. While dotted <g> or <gh> is given in English characters as <gh>, <ídh>, <ígh> are given as <í>, etc. <pp>, encountered in Daniel’s guide of 1658, is found here also. Covering a great deal in condensed form, the Alphabet page circulated also as an independent sheet.⁸³ This is presumably a guide to assist Irish-speakers literate in English unfamiliar with written Irish.

1819 Thady Connellan’s short guide

In a work of 1818 produced by the Sligo-born Thady Connellan for the Hibernian Bible Society, there is an Irish alphabet and tables of mutable consonants, digraphs and trigraphs (pp. 140–43).⁸⁴ A short guide to pronunciation from his pen begins his 1819 edition of *The First Books of the Pentateuch, or Books of Moses*, which the title-page informs us was designed ‘as a preparation for learners to read the Holy Scriptures’.⁸⁵ In an ‘Advertisement’ at the beginning of the book, he sets out his belief that through Irish-language instruction, ‘tens of thousand of Irish people now so ignorant of letters’ could be brought ultimately to English. He requests that ‘whosoever can or may read this work, will teach or cause to be taught, *gratis*, twenty four individuals to read this book’ for the purpose of ‘spreading Scriptural and moral knowledge’.

A guide to reading Irish (without any heading, so far as I can see) concludes the book (pp. 195–200). It is almost entirely plagiarised from Vallancey’s *Grammar* (pp. 31–7).⁸⁶ It begins ‘Of the Modern Alphabet’ (the title of the fifth chapter of Vallancey’s *Grammar*),

⁸³ For example, see TCD OLS POL 7051, where the recto of the corresponding page in the 1818 New Testament is not printed.

⁸⁴ *Seanraite Sholaimh a Ghaoidheilge agus a mBearla. The Proverbs of Solomon, in Irish and English*. [Dublin: Christie, 1818].

⁸⁵ *The Two First Books of the Pentateuch, or Books of Moses: as a Preparation for Learners to read the Holy Scriptures. The types cut by Dr Edmund Fry, Letter Founder to his Majesty, from original Irish Manuscripts, under the care and direction of Mr T. Connellan, Author of the English Irish Dictionary and Irish English Elementary, printed by Messrs Graisberry & Campbell, Dublin, in the years 1814 and 1815. Printed at the Apollo Press, London, by J. Johnson, Brook Street, Holborn, 1819.*

⁸⁶ I have compared the 1782 edition.

giving ‘the order, names, pronunciation, and derivation of the *Aibchitir*, or alphabet now in use’. The pronunciation given for <e> (‘e French’), <f> (‘ef’), <g> (‘γ gamma, Gr.’) and <i> (‘i French’) are notable, as is the fact that Connellan is prepared to follow Vallancey into error, giving the pronunciation of <s> as ‘sh’ without qualification. <h> is given last. The only evidence of re-organisation by Connellan is the inclusion here of the ‘derivation’ of the letter-names; these are treated elsewhere by Vallancey. Eight figures included by ‘the ancients’ in their alphabet are also given (<q>, <z>, <ng>, <ea>, <io>, <y>, <ae>), which do not form part of Vallancey’s fifth chapter. <ae> is said to be called *amhancholl* ‘from *amhan* a river, and *coll*, the hazel tree, of which were made hurdles for crossing brooks and rivers’. This explanation partially corresponds to that proposed by Vallancey in his *Grammar* (p. 6).

On p. 196, Connellan-Vallancey turns to vowels, which are ‘broad’ and ‘narrow’, though in the next paragraph ‘broad’ and ‘small’. The rule *caol le caol agus leathan le leathan* is discussed, giving the example *du-ne* as ‘false orthography’ for *dui-ne*. It is stated that no vowel is ever doubled (‘as *ee*, *oo*, &c.’) and, in a footnote, that <l>, <n> and <r> are the only letters written double.

In ‘Of the Diphthongs and Triptpoings [sic]’, Connellan introduces eighteen such ‘union[s] of two or three vowels’, ten of which are always long. Here he corrects Vallancey (p. 32), who gave the number of diphthongs and triphthongs as seventeen, having omitted <iu> (coincidentally also omitted in the 1680 *Graimmeir*). Connellan then spools back to simple vowels to state that they – like eight of the ‘diphthongs’ and ‘triphthongs’ (including <eo>) – are sometimes long and sometimes short. In point of fact, this is more correct than Vallancey’s treatment (*Grammar*, p. 33) but not better organised. On p. 197, he gives the quatrain beginning *Ceithre amhanchoil ríomhthar leam*, and then presents a table of these vowel-graph combinations. I do not find either the verse or a similar table in Vallancey.

Connellan returns quickly to plagiarising Vallancey in his treatment of consonants, giving their number as twelve, divided into mutable and immutable. The nine mutables are given and of the three remaining consonants we read, ‘The immutables are <l>, <n>, <r>, which always retain their sound’. The discussion returns to the mutable consonants:

Some of these mutable consonants, when an aspirate or *h* is added, become other consonants, which may, therefore, be called secondary or auxiliary mutes; and others are annihilated, the use of writing them being only to point out the radix, and to prevent the disguising of the word.

The force of pronunciation of each secondary mute is so different from that of the prime, that, had custom prevailed, they might have been expressed by different figures or letters, as is commonly done in other languages, from whence arises the difficulty of finding the etymology, and the reason why the language has been so well preserved. (pp. 197–8)

The remainder of Connellan's guide, like the above passage, is lifted word for word from Vallancey. <bh> 'is pronounced as v consonant' (p. 198). <ch> 'is pronounced like the Greek χ [...] but when a small vowel precedes *ch* in the termination, the *h* only is pronounced'. Broad initial <dh> and <gh> 'has the pronunciation of *gh* soft or guttural [...] but *dh* in the beginning before a small vowel, or in the middle before any vowel, sounds like *y*'. Connellan even includes Vallancey's reference to Welsh *byddar*: 'The pronunciation of *dh*, in *bodhar* deaf, is *bour*, which the Welsh have commuted with *th*, and which is pronounced by them as *bothar* would be in English'. Of final <dh>, Vallancey-Connellan writes, 'after a broad vowel [it] sounds like *u*; as *madadh*, a dog; but after a small vowel is pronounced only as *h*, and that faintly, as *mhadaidh*, of the dog', which is not an adequate treatment of the issue. Palatal and medial <gh> are not discussed at all. Connellan is content to give further comparative speculations under <fh>, which, following Vallancey 'was probably pronounced heretofore as *h*, seeing we find the Spaniards use that pronunciation in words borrowed from the Latin, as *hierro*, *harrino*, *hermoso*, for *ferrum*, *farina*, *formosus*; but at present *fh* is not pronounced at all [...]'. Strangely Connellan gives the Spanish and Latin words in Irish font. <mh> 'is pronounced as v consonant, or rather as *w*'. Truly extraordinary is Vallancey's account of <ph> and Connellan's mindless parroting of it. Vallancey states that 'before a vowel' <ph> is pronounced as <f> (giving the examples *a Pheadair*, *a Phoil*, *a Phadruicc*), but 'if a small vowel (*e* or *i*) immediately follows in the beginning of a word, it is not pronounced at all; as *a Philib*, read *a Ilib*' (p. 199). This is a confusion of two variant forms of the name, one with initial *p*-, the other with initial *f*-. <sh> is correctly equated to the sound of <h>, 'although *s* be commonly equivalent to the English *sh*'. (Connellan slips again here and gives English <sh> in Irish characters.)

In 'Of Double Letters', we read 'When *l*, *m*, *n*, *r*, follow *s* in the same syllable, they are pronounced as if doubled; thus *slíabh*, *sríán* and *sníamh*, are to be read *slliav*, *srrian*, *snniav*'. <cc>, <tt> and <pp> for <g>, <d> and are noted (contradicting an earlier statement that only <l>, <n> and <r> are ever doubled). 'But when two consonant meet in a compound word, they retain their primitive sound; as *brait-tirim* is read, and usually wrote

also, *braitirim*'. Assimilation of <ld> and <ln> is noted (though an example is only given for the latter, viz. *colna*).

Eclipsis is treated with the aid of a table of the 'seven consonants that suffer eclipsis' (omitting <g>, which is treated separately) (pp. 199–200). <ng> in eclipsis 'is so far peculiar, that the *g* is not quite taken off, but is partially pronounced, as in the English, jointly with the *n*; as *ar ngort* our corn' (p. 200). 'Suppression' (i.e. homorganic delenition) is briefly adverted to. Connellan manages to disimprove on Vallancey's presentation by interposing a 'Table of contractions and secondary mutes' into the middle of this discussion.

Connellan must have had a practical, pedagogical aim in mind in appending an introduction to reading Irish to a religious work designed to further the spread of scriptural awareness among Irish speakers. It speaks volumes about Connellan's lack of planning on this occasion (evident also in his other productions) that he selected Vallancey's historical grammar – which had no such object in mind – of all possible guides to plagiarise.⁸⁷

1820 The Spiritual Rose again

It has already been noted that the 'Instructions' of the first edition of the *Spiritual Rose* were reprinted in the 1825 edition. In an intervening edition of 1820,⁸⁸ however, now represented by a unique copy in the library of the National Folklore Collection at UCD, they were replaced by a few lines on lenited letters at the bottom of the last page of the book:

Take notice, dear Reader, that if you find any difficulty in reading this Book, on account of the mortified letters you meet mostly in every word, you can easily understand them by viewing them in the underneath line, where every mortified letter is known by having H annexed to it; and the letter that such a mortified letter signifies, is placed under the same, as thus. –

⁸⁷ For some information on Connellan and the difficulties of providing an adequate account of works in which 'material is used over and over again' and 'the pagination is often irregular', see O'Sullivan 1941–3.

⁸⁸ *The Spiritual Rose, or Method of saying the Rosaries of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, and the Blessed Virgin, with their Litanies: also the Meditations and Prayers, adapted to The Holy Way of the Cross; &c. This edition has been arranged, corrected and revised, by an eminent Irish Scholar and Divine and several Devotions and Prayers have been added, which was not in any former Edition. Rendered into Irish by Matthew Kennedy. Greacen, Printer, Monaghan, 1820.*

The list that follows is alphabetical with <bh> and <mh> equated with <v>, <dh> and <gh> with <y>, and <ph> with <f>. The equation of <sh> and <th> with <h> is not entirely satisfactory. Bizarrely the value of <fh> is given as <o>. This is the simplest guide we have met with thus far, but it would find imitators.

1820 Scurry

James Scurry's guide is a very different beast from that found with the 1820 edition of the *Spiritual Rose*. Scurry was a Kilkenny-born scribe and linguist, deeply influenced by contemporary linguistic thought and concerned with philosophy of language.⁸⁹ Prefixed to his translation of Giovanni Battista Manni's *Four Maxims of Christian Philosophy* is 'An Introduction to the Irish Language' (pp. v–xxx), which is subtitled 'A Comprehensive Exemplification of the Alphabetic sounds, and their corresponding English sounds, as a further illustration of them, so far as could be affected by the substitution of English Characters'.⁹⁰ The subheading suggests familiarity with Patrick Lynch's grammar of 1815, but beyond this verbal resemblance I can see nothing to indicate that Scurry made use of Lynch's work.⁹¹ The heading 'The Modern Irish Alphabet' on the first page of this guide suggests familiarity with Vallancey's grammar. But Scurry's greatest debt is to Donlevy, from whom he has clearly absorbed a great deal (as already mentioned above).

⁸⁹ Scurry and his linguistic thought are the subject of a detailed (if somewhat unwieldy) study by Ua Cearnaigh (2011). The text to be discussed here is reproduced in an appendix to that volume.

⁹⁰ [First title page] *Cheithre Soleirseadha de'n Eagnuidheacht Chriostuidhe, tarraingthe o cheithre leir-smuaintighthibh na siorruidheachta. Air na sgríobhadh go bunnudhasach ann Iottailis le Eoin Baptista Manni, dhe Chomhlúadar Iosa, agus curtha a mBeurla Sacsanach le W. V. agus ionntoighthe o Shacs-bheulra go Gaoidheilg le Seumas O'Scoireadh. Portlairge: ar na chur a gClodh le Eoin Bull. 1820.*

[Second title page] *Four Maxims of Christian Philosophy, drawn from four considerations of eternity. Written originally in Italian, by John Baptista Manni, of the Society of Jesus; and translated into Irish by James Scurry. To which is prefixed, An Introduction to the Irish Language, for the use of Persons desirous of learning their vernacular tongue without the aid of a Teacher. Waterford: Printed by John Bull. 1820.*

⁹¹ *For-oideas ghnaith-Ghaoighilge na h-Eireand. An Introduction to the Knowledge of the Irish Language, as now spoken: containing a comprehensive exemplification of the alphabetic sounds and a complete analysis of the accidents of the declinable parts [. . .]: systematically arranged and methodically disposed in fourteen short synoptic tables. [. . .] By Patrick Lynch, Sec. to the Gaelic Society of Dublin, &c. Dublin: Printed by Graisberry and Campbell, 10, Back-Lane; And sold by Messrs Gilbert & Hodges, H. Fitzpatrick, Cummins, Watson, &c., Booksellers, Dublin, 1815.*

The letters are numbered, given their Irish letter-names and a ‘derivation’. The usual subdivisions are carried out. Scurry introduces the compound terms *leathan-ghuthaidhe agus caol-ghuthaidhe*, which reflect the influence of English terminology on his thinking (p. vi). He notes the terms *Deagh-fhoghracha agus Treagh-fhoghracha*, and the subdivision of consonants into mutables and immutables, but also into ‘simple and aspirated, broad and slender’ and ‘labials, dentals, gutturals, nasals and palatals’, reflecting his own grounding in phonetics. The same categories are proposed in the grammar prefixed to O’Reilly’s 1817 *Sanas* (p. 2), but the distribution of consonants is somewhat different. Scurry gives further information on some of these categories. Simple consonants are defined as ‘those which have the sound of one letter unmixed with others’. He equates aspirated with mutable consonants. His subdivision of the consonants into phonetic categories is as follows: the labials are made up of lenited *b*, *p*, *f* and *m*; the dentals are *t*, *d* and *s*; the gutturals are lenited *c*, *g* and *d*; the nasals are *m*, *n* and *ng*; the palatals are *l* and *r*. He then refers to ‘servile or adventitious consonants’, which ‘eclipse the radical or primary consonant of the word’ (p. vii). The ‘adventitious’ use of <n>, <t> and <s> before vowels is also noticed. He explains his usage of capitilising the radical letter throughout his work (see also p. xxx), a usage already encountered (and described) in Donlevy.

The first table exhibits ‘the Quantities of Simple Vowels’ (p. viii). The numbered lines recall the layout in Neilson’s grammar of colloquial Ulster Irish (pp. 3–4),⁹² though there is a greater variety of tables in Scurry. As noted by O’Donovan (*Grammar*, lxiii), this contains valuable information on the Irish of Ossory, but Scurry was also a prescriptivist, concerned with standardisation and guided by his sense of ‘analogy’. He notes, for example, a ‘diphthongal’ *a* in *ball* (pronounced ‘a short and oo close’) and *tabhairt* (‘ou in sound’), but he condemns the diphthongisation of *a* and *o* brought about by middle quantity or the vocalisation of lenited consonants as being ‘diametrically opposed to analogy, and contrary to the nature of these pure-sounding vowels’ (p. x). He has in mind words like *radharc*, *bodhar*, *am* and *tom*.⁹³ Beneath this table he gives ‘General Rules for pointing out where different

⁹² *An Introduction to the Irish language in three parts. I. An original and comprehensive grammar. II. Familiar phrases and dialogues. III. Extracts from Irish books, and manuscripts, in the original character. With copious tables of the contractions* By Rev. Wm. Neilson. Dublin: Printed for P. Wogan, 15, Lower Ormonde-quay, 1808.

⁹³ He includes *aghall* ‘flesh hook’ in his list, though the <gh> in that word is originally no more than a hiatus-marker, the Old Irish form being disyllabic *aél* (see *DIL* s.v. 2 *áel* and Watkins 2005). The Classical Modern Irish form is given in *IGT* II as *áeil* (perhaps *aéil*), but I have no examples in verse to confirm whether this remains disyllabic. In the Irish Old Testament, the word is spelt *adhal*. It is difficult to account for the form

sounds of the Vowels prevail’, which is a rudimentary attempt at formulating the phonotactics of vowel-length in Irish (pp. ix–x), building on an earlier attempt by Donlevy.

Another table follows dealing with diphthongs. We may note here that he gives pronunciation of <ea> in *rinneadh* as ‘obscure’, like ‘e in her’ (p. x). The pronunciation of <oi> in *coill* is given as ‘i in while’ (p. xi). The triphthongs are dealt with somewhat more speedily. For those diphthongs that vary in length, reference is made to the general rules concerning the distribution of vowel-length proposed under the simple vowels.

Under ‘Of the Consonants’, the traditional bardic division into consonant-classes is noted before each consonant is treated ‘in its simple, aspirated and eclipsing or eclipsed states’ (pp. xii–xiii). The presentation of information here draws inspiration from Donlevy but the exposition is much more detailed. This is only partially alphabetical (radical *b*, lenited *b*, nasalised *b* are followed by <bp> and <bhf>, then *c*). The bardic classifications and (occasionally) earlier spelling conventions are noted. Palatal and non-palatal radical consonants are distinguished throughout. Initial broad <bh> ‘sounds exactly like *w* in the English words, wall, wo, woo’, but ‘in the middle of a word, preceded or succeeded by any vowel, or when followed or preceded by *e* or *i*, it sounds as *v* in the English words, lover, virtue, live’. The last statement is (partially at least) a prescriptive rather than descriptive observation: as an example, he gives *labhairt*, but earlier he complains of the ‘diphthongal’ pronunciation of the word (p. x). Still under <bh> there follow general rules on lenition (pp. xiv–xv), in what is referred to as ‘a guide for the scholar’. General rules on eclipsis are given under <bhf> (p. xvi).

On initial slender <ch> he only states that it is ‘a slender sound’ (p. xvii). Two pronunciations of radical *d* are given: slender <d> is a ‘slender or liquid sound like *d* in the English words dew, duty’ (p. xviii). The treatment of <dh> is thorough; it distinguishes between a ‘broad, flat sound, for which we have no corresponding English sound, as heard in *mo dhorus* [...]’, ‘a sharp, squeezed sound, corresponding with *y* in the English words ye, yet, and is caused by being in the beginning of a word, and followed by *e* or *i*’, and ‘an aspirate sound at the end of verbs of the infinitive mood, present participle and participial nouns, and all other nouns ending in *dh*’, for which examples like *ag deanadh* ‘doing’ are given. Scurry then adds that it can have ‘the sound of *g* simple’ in the passive past tense (*rinneadh e*) and 2

adhal; like the <gh> of *aghall*, the medial ‘consonant’ of *adhal* is probably no more than a hiatus-marker and the short final syllable may reflect contamination with *gabhal* ‘fork’.

pl. imperative ('*buailidh* strike ye') (pp. xviii–xix) and as gen. sing. and nom. pl. of masc. nouns ending in *-ch* (p. xix). He objects that *manaich* is 'more correct and analogical [i.e. regular]' than *manaigh* and is the spelling which he has adopted for all such nouns in his work. He further notes words like *mordha* and *diadha*. Finally, he states that some verbal ending *-eadh* are pronounced as if in *-ch* (p. xix). Under 'dT', he notes that 'D also eclipses F', as when 'the pronoun *do*, thy, becomes elided or apostrophized before it' (p. xx; cf. p. xxi), an old idea – met with as early as Daniel (1658) and found again in O'Connuill (1795) – that the reduced form of words like *do* is to be analysed as the initial of a word beginning with a lenited *f*-. As far as the phonological word, this is accurate enough, but it is also a convenient rule for reading, as the orthographical word too appears to begin with <d>.

Scurry incorrectly states that *fh* is 'styled by the poets a rough consonant'; he is confusing this with *f* and *ph*. His interest in phonotactics emerges again when he remarks that '[t]his combination can begin, but never end a syllable' (p. xxi). He notes elsewhere that '[t]he ancients wrote *ff* for this combination [*bhf*]'. <gh> is said to be 'more guttural' than <dh> (p. xxii). Broad <ng> is said to come 'very near the sound *ng* has in the English words, longer, stronger, thus divided *lo-nger*, *stro-nger*', while the palatal allophone resembles 'singer' divided as 'si-nger' (p. xxii). He further emphasises that the sounds must 'flow together' in Irish *ng*. Broad <l> is said to have no corresponding sound in English (p. xxiii). Of double <ll>, he notes that *colna* is pronounced *colla*, and that 'sometimes in the beginning of a word though single it sounds as if double, when the personal pronoun (*a*) her is placed before a word beginning with L or when it is combined with S', and that 'the same may be remarked of *n* and *r* in the same situation'. <mh> is said to be somewhat more nasal than <bh> (p. xxiv). Broad <n>, Scurry informs us, is like no sound in English, but 'sounds broader and flatter than *Gn* in the English word *Gnaw*'. Under 'bP', he notes that 'the Antients wrote PP for bP' (p. xxv). Scurry has a charming description of the palatal *r* of Kilkenny Irish: 'A slender sound when closing a syllable, and *i* the next vowel to it, which nearly resembled the sound *z* has in the English words, glazier, grazier' (p. xxvi). Finally, he protests at the exclusion of <h> from the Irish alphabet (pp. xxviii–xxix), a point made earlier by Plunket in his edition of *Génair Pátraic*.

In concluding, Scurry recommends O'Brien's and O'Reilly's Grammars and laments that 'for the want of Irish type in Waterford' he could not have the book printed 'in the native Irish Characters'.

Scurry's 'Introduction' is a work of scholarship and insight, but it is difficult to assess its utility. Its placement, at the beginning of a religious translation, suggest that it is a manual for reading Irish, but it reads rather like a short linguistic treatise on Irish phonology and orthography, and, indeed, it is presented as such. The comparisons to English sounds seem more designed to clarify the phonology than to render the task of reading Irish easier. From a practical view-point, shorter, less technical (and of necessity less accurate) manuals would undoubtedly be of more practical use. On the other hand, Scurry's reference to the 'scholar' may suggest that he thought of his 'Introduction' as a work for study in the classroom rather than as a simple key to rapidly acquiring enough knowledge to read the translation, in which case the detailed description of Irish sounds would not be out of place as part of broader studies in the Irish language.

1822 Denn

The much-reprinted *Pious Miscellany* of Tadhg Gaelach Ó Súilleabháin⁹⁴ was furnished by Patrick Denn of Ceapach Choinn in Waterford with a short guide to reading Irish in an 1822 edition.⁹⁵ The preface 'To the Public' from 'The Editor', expresses the hope that the book will come into 'the hands of the rising Generation' and also 'the Adult', and that it will be sung '[d]uring the Long nights of winter' by Catholic families (p. 2). Beneath the heading 'Instructions for Reading this Miscellany', which occurs at the end of his edition of the *Pious Miscellany* (pp. 129–30), Denn begins:

Dear Reader,

Perhaps you may find some difficulty in reading this Book on account of the mortified Letters, when the letter *h* is annexed to them. In order to facilitate such difficulty to you, I have in the following remarks, explained by a few Examples, how you are to pronounce such words or syllables as have been mortified by the addition of said letter (*h*)...

He then gives eight numbered rules (which correspond to eight 'mortified' consonants').

<bh> (point 1) and <mh> (point 5) are pronounced 'like v' (but his examples only show

⁹⁴ See Sharpe 2014 for editions of the text.

⁹⁵ *A New Edition of Timothy O'Sullivan's Commonly Called Taidhag Gaodhlach's Pious Miscellany. Much improved and well corrected, with an appendix, of other religious compositions, And now recommended to all devout Catholics as a Work of great merit. Sixth Edition. Cork: Printed by Charles Dillon, No. 1, Castle Street, 1822.*

lenition in initial position). <dh> (point 2) and <gh> (point 4) sound ‘like y’: again only initial position is given. <ch> is not discussed. <th> is said to sound ‘like h’ (point 8). For medial and final *th*, one might have expected the pronunciation /x/ (*SnaG* 487), but Denn may not have wished to give such a local pronunciation in a guide of this type and, in any event, as with <bh> and <mh> he appears to have had only initial <ch> in mind.

The second page begins, ‘When the following Consonants meet together in the beginning of a word or syllable, the second is influenced by the first’. He gives examples of the nasalisation of initial , <c>, <d>, <f>, <p> and <t> and also ‘A Cseaghain, O John, &c.’ ‘Cseaghain’ is presumably for *ChSeagháin*: <cs> is obviously intended here to reflect a dialectal realisation of lenited *s*- before a long vowel (here [a:]) with slender onset as [xʲ], a feature of the Irish of Waterford (Breatnach 1947: 140) and other Munster dialects (Ó Cuív 1944: 118). Unlike the Ring realisation of *-th(-)*, this feature was presumably widespread enough among the likely readers of his book (printed in Cork) to justify his use of an orthographical convention to describe it.

The final section is headed ‘Of the Vowels’. ‘When *ao* meet together, they sound like *e* in English’, while *aoi* ‘sound like *ee* in English’. ‘When *ai* meet, they sound like *oi*; as, *faisg*, *squeex*; *sail*, *heel*, &c.’ Denn then writes:

As to the sound of the other vowels when they meet, they mostly sound as they do in English; but sometimes short and sometimes long, as occasion requires. – When they have a long sound, there is generally a little stroke called Aspiration placed over them in some Irish books: as for example – *do ghearas mo mheur*, I cut my finger; *do bhuail me Tomas*, I beat Thomas, &c.

There is clearly typographical and terminological confusion in the above-cited passage.

Denn concludes:

I think there is no occasion to say more here concerning these little remarks. If the Learner desires to acquire a better knowledge of the Irish, let him get a good Irish Grammar which may give him copious information of the Rudiments and Spelling Rules of the Language. It is there he can satisfy his desire, and gratify his curiosity.

This brief introduction is dated ‘Cappoquin, April 9, 1822.’

Denn had the added advantage of his own more phonetic spelling system based on English, which simplified the task of reading Irish for Irish-speakers literate in English but not in literary Irish. His guide was thought good enough to be plagiarised by the Cork printer William Fergusson and used to fatten up unsold copies of the latter's 1821 edition of the *Pious Miscellany*.⁹⁶

1822 Donlevy again⁹⁷

The editor, Fr. John M'Encroe (1794–1868), a native of Ardsallagh, Co. Tipperary and graduate of Maynooth, concludes his preface to this edition of Donlevy's Catechism: 'For the convenience of those, who are desirous to study the Irish, a clear and comprehensive compendium of Irish Grammar is attached to the work' (p. v). 'A Compendium of Irish Grammar' makes up pp. 413–24. It begins with an Irish alphabet with letter-names, the corresponding English characters, (for vowels) examples of both long and short quantity, and finally English explanations of the letter-names. The consonants are said to be like those in English (p. 414). The vowels are subdivided. The use of the mark of length is mentioned. Five 'diphthongs' that are always long are given (not including <eo>) and the five triphthongs. <l>, <n> and <r> are declared to be immutable, though when doubled 'have a strong sound'. Under the heading 'Of mutable or aspirated consonants', advice is given on pronunciation: slender <bh> or <bh> at the end of a word is pronounced 'like v', broad <bh> 'like u or w' (p. 414). The same distribution is later given for <mh>. Broad and slender <ch> are distinguished. Broad <dh> 'sounds like gh' (but the example given is *mo Dhia!*), while slender <dh> 'sounds like y'. Following a consonant or at the end of the word, it 'has a weak aspirate sound'. Broad initial <gh> 'has a deep guttural sound', but slender <gh> 'sounds like y in youth'. <gh> is mute medially or at the end of a word. The pronunciation of <dn> in *ceadna* and <ln> in *colna* is briefly treated (p. 415). Eclipsis is indicated by a table, which

⁹⁶ A New Edition of Timothy O'Sullivan's Commonly Called Taidhag Gaodhlach's *Pious Miscellany*; much improved by many religious additions, and now recommended to all Devout Catholics, as a work of great merit. The sixth edition. Cork: Printed and sold by William Fergusson, 22, Patrick-Street, Within One House of Marlborough-Street, 1821. (Sole traced copy now in the NLI.)

⁹⁷ *An Teagasg Críosduidhe. The Christian Doctrine, by way of question and answer, in Irish and English* [. . .] by Rev. A. Donlevy, DD. Revised by the Rev. John M'Encroe. Corrected from the Press by E. O'Reilly, Esq., Author of the *Irish Dictionary, Grammar, Irish Writers, &c.* [. . .] With a Pathetic Poem of the life and sufferings of Jesus Christ, and A Compendium of Irish Grammar. Dublin: Printed by Thomas Courtney, 18, Whitefriar-street; Sold by R. Coyne, 4, Capel-street, and D. Wogan, Merchant's-quay, and the principal Booksellers in Ireland, 1822.

shows the relevant mutations on eight consonants (including <t> on <s>) and gives a more phonetic spelling of their pronunciation (*ar mbrón, ar mrón*).

The rest of the compendium is concerned with grammar proper ('Parts of Speech', which gives four nominal declensions and discusses adjectival declension also; 'Degrees of Comparison'; 'Pronouns'; 'Auxiliary Verbs' and 'Regular Verbs' in both active and passive voice). For 'compound pronouns', the reader is referred to 'O'Brien's grammar' (p. 419). Reference is also made to the grammar in O'Reilly's *Sanas*. This is the second time in such a guide that a précis of Irish grammar was appended to the more usual phonological information (see Lynch's 1810 effort above).

1824 (?) *Doway Catechism* again

The manual to reading Irish in the 1824 (?) edition of the Doway Catechism is the same as that printed in 1738 ('A few Instructions for reading the Irish Language'), but it is repackaged on the title-page:

The Doway Catechism, in English and Irish for the use of Schools. To which is prefixed a method of learning to read Irish without a Master, for the instruction of such persons as have neglected this useful study in their youth; and is a most excellent introduction to the reading and understanding of Dr Gallagher's seventeen Irish sermons, so universally read throughout the Kingdom of Ireland.⁹⁸

By this period instructional books that could be used 'without a master' were a feature of publishing; this is the context in which John O'Daly and others were to produce books of self-instruction for use 'without a master' in Irish.⁹⁹ The *Sermons* of James Gallagher (†1751), bishop of Raphoe (originally sixteen when first published in 1735 but by 1740 a seventeenth was often added) were, indeed, printed many times (the last edition noted is in

⁹⁸ *Galway: Printed and sold by George Connolly, Book-Seller and Stationer, No. 5, High-street, [?1824].*

⁹⁹ John O'Daly, for example, was clearly influenced by such books. He wrote to John Windele on 13 February 1847: 'A new edition of *Self-Instruction* goes to press in a few days and I propose bringing it out on the plan of those books entitled language "without a Master". At all events it will differ materially from the *Self-Instruction*' (Ó Drisceoil 2007: 159–60). The reference is apparently to the first edition of his *Féin-Theagasg Gaoidheilge. Self-Instruction in Irish; or, The rudiments of that language brought within the comprehension of the English reader, without the aid of a teacher. By John O'Daly. Dublin: John Daly, 25, Anglesea Street, 1846* [sic].

1820), and it is a measure of their success that this guide to reading is here associated with them.¹⁰⁰

1825 Denn again

At the back-cover of his *Catholic Children's Religious Primer*,¹⁰¹ Denn prints a 'N.B.' concerning 'the mortified letters'. He must have taken inspiration from the 1820 *Spiritual Rose* or something similar to it. As in the 1820 *Rose*, Denn here gives the eight letters in question with an English equivalent beneath, and here too the value of <fh> is given as <o>.

1830 Owen Connellan

In 1830, Owen Connellan, a native of Co. Sligo and relative of Thady (whose slavish recycling of Vallancey as a guide to reading Irish was described above), printed the Gospel of St John with interlinear English translation, followed by a 'grammatical praxis' (line-by-line grammatical notes).¹⁰² He explicitly acknowledges (p. v) that he is following the method of James Hamilton (1769–1829), who printed part of St John's Gospel in French with interlineal translations in 1816 and followed this with other texts annotated in the same way. This was preceded by eleven pages of 'A Short Introduction to Irish Pronunciation' (pp. 1–11) and 'familiar phrases' (pp. 12–17) (which include such 'familiar phrases' as the Irish for 'God save the king' and 'Bishop Bedell was the first person who translated the Old Testament'). There are also 'familiar conversations' and 'numerals' at the end of the book (pp. 258–76).

In the grammatical notes on the gospel text, Connellan references Neilson's grammar of colloquial east Ulster Irish (1808), 'the least exceptionable [grammar] hitherto published' (p. 140) and Connellan's 'Short Introduction' owes a certain amount to that grammar. It begins with 'The Irish Alphabet', giving the Irish letters (upper- and lower-case), then the

¹⁰⁰ For Gallagher's sermons, see Walsh 1911 and O'Rahilly 1913.

¹⁰¹ *The Catholic Children's Religious Primer; containing the prayers, &c., necessary for the instruction of youth, and even for the adult; also, the Lord's Prayer, and the principal parts of the Mass expounded, with, the Rosaries and Litanies of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, the Rosary for the dead, and the Recommendation of a soul departing, &c. Translated by P. Denn. Irish. Cork: Printed for the author by Charles Dillon, 1825.*

¹⁰² *The Gospel according to St John in Irish, with an interlined English translation; and a Grammatical Praxis on the Gospel according to St Matthew, in Irish: accompanied with a short introduction to Irish pronunciation; and an appendix, consisting of familiar conversations. For the use of students, by Owen Connellan, Transcriber of Ancient Irish Manuscripts to His Majesty [Dublin:] Printed for Richard Moore Tims, 85, Grafton-Street, Dublin; Hamilton & Adams, Paternoster-Row, London; Waugh & Innes, Edinburgh 1830.*

corresponding English letters, the Irish letter-names and translations of these last. There follows a ‘Table of Contractions’, which incidentally gives *go* and *gan* as the values of <g> + suspension stroke. The alphabet and the vowels are subdivided in the normal way and the concept of broad and slender is introduced. The ‘diphthongs’ and ‘triphthongs’ are listed, and those that are always long are given (<iu> is wrongly included here, but given as both long and short two pages later).

The second page is headed ‘Sounds of the Vowels’ and in layout clearly follows Scurry (see above). It begins ‘The organs of speech admit only a limited number of essentially different positions formative of articulate sound’ and in a wordy paragraph explains that despite this ‘hardly two languages exist, in which all the sounds are strictly identical’, but nonetheless the sounds of Irish are approximated as best as possible to English, or failing this to other languages, in the tables that follow. The various pronunciations of each vowel are set out in lines of four columns which allow for cross-referencing, e.g. ‘1. *á* long’, which in English is said to sound like ‘*a* in *all*’, has the examples *bán* and *bár*, which are then spelt phonetically (p. 2). The phonetic transcriptions are the most elaborate hitherto published in such a guide; the influence of John Walker’s *A Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language*, first published in 1791, to which explicit reference is made once in the guide, is clear. Two ‘*a* shorts’ are given (though one of these would nowadays be described as being of middle length).¹⁰³ ‘*a* obscure’ is used to describe the schwa in the second syllable of *adharc*, while ‘*a* diphthongal’ describes the first vowel in that word. ‘*e* obscure’ is compared to the vowel in English ‘the’ with reference to ‘Walker’s Dictionary’. Irish *én* and *lén* are said to contain ‘*e* diphthongal’ and are to be pronounced ‘*ay-en*’ and ‘*lay-en*’ (that is, with a clearly audible semivowel). On p. 6, Connellan turns to ‘Sounds of the Diphthongs’, which are presented in a similar way. The phonetic transcriptions allow him to capture the semivowels after the initial consonant in *ceól* (‘*kyo-ul*’) (p. 6) and *fuil* (‘*fwil*’) (p. 7). Note the phonetic rendering of *coir* as ‘*kũ-ir*’. The long <ui> in *buidhe* (not to be confused with <úi>) is said to sound like ‘*ui* in *lui.French.*’ (p. 4). After ‘Sounds of the Triphthongs’, Connellan writes:

It is here to be observed, that most of these diphthongs and triphthongs are improperly so called; being either single vowel sounds, as shown by the references to the table of vowels; or dissyllables, as shown by the hyphens in the English spelling. They appear,

¹⁰³ Lynch’s 1815 grammar of Irish also makes use of similar conventions to those found in Walker’s *Pronouncing Dictionary* to better indicate pronunciation.

however, to be considered as such; because all of them ought to be pronounced as much in one syllable as possible. (p. 4)

As an example of a hyphenated spelling, one can cite *fuair* ‘foo-ur’, which is indeed a true diphthong, but Connellan is the first to recognise in print (in such a guide at any event) that the traditional terminology of ‘diphthong’ and ‘triphthong’ is inaccurate.

The ‘Sounds of the Consonants’ are presented in similar tables. These deal only with the radical forms. ‘ddh’ is used to indicate the pronunciation of broad <d> as in *dán* (‘ddhawn’) (p. 4) and this is explained in a note: ‘This is a combination of the sound of *d*, as in *do*, and of *dh*, as *th* in *then*.’ Three *l* are distinguished: ‘1. *l*.’ sounds like ‘*l* in *low*’ and is found in Irish *bealach* (‘bal’-ogh’), while ‘2. *l*.’ apparently sounds like ‘*ll* in *fille*, French’ and is found in *leac* (‘lla-uc’).¹⁰⁴ He explains (pp. 5–6) that this pronunciation is brought about by the presence of a ‘diphthongal *y*’ in pronunciation. ‘3. *l*.’ is nasal and occurs in Irish *lán*. Similarly, two *n* are distinguished, the second of which (found in *ní* ‘nnee’) is compared to ‘2. *l*.’ (p. 6). Two *r* are distinguished: ‘1. *r*, thrilled’ (like in English ‘row’) found in Irish *rann*, and ‘2. *r*, slurred’ (like in English ‘far’ but ‘accompanied with something of a guttural hissing through the teeth’) found in *géire*. Only one <t> is given (the Irish example is *tor*), transcribed as *tth*, which is then explained.

The ‘Mutable Consonants’ are not treated in tabular form, instead being dealt with under headings (‘*bh* and *mh*’, ‘*ch*’, etc.). Broad <mh> and <bh> are said to sound ‘like *w* in wall’. (The examples show these letters in initial and medial position.) Slender <mh> and <bh> ‘sound like *v* in vine’. (The examples are in initial position.) Broad <ch> ‘has a strong guttural sound, like *gh* in *lough*, like the Hebrew φ , the Greek χ , or German *ch*’ (p. 6). Palatal <ch> is ‘less guttural’. ‘Before the triphthong *uai*, it approximates the sound of *f*: as *chuaidh* (foo-ee) *he went*.’ (This pronunciation is found in some parts of Connacht today (*SnaG* 593) and was presumably a feature of Connellan’s own dialect.) The pronunciation of broad and slender <dh> is distinguished (the latter ‘takes the squeezed sound of *y* in *yet*’) and the loss of palatal <dh> at the ends of words or syllables (when it ‘has the sound of *ee*’) is discussed (e.g. *bidhim*, which is in fact historically *bím*). He then discusses instances where <dh> has ‘the sound of *oo*’ (pp. 6–7), as in *leigheadh sé* ‘let him read’, which is transcribed as ‘llay’-oo shay’, and instances where it is silent (p. 7). He repeats the claim – ultimately derived from

¹⁰⁴ Was *ville* meant?

Vallancey and adopted from this authority by his kinsman Thady into his guide (see above) – that palatal <ph> ‘in the genitive or vocative cases’ is silent (p. 8).

At the end of this discussion of mutable consonants, Connellan has a long and detailed discussion of when aspiration occurs (pp. 8–10), expanded from a similar list in Scurry. He notes lenition of the ‘pres. participle’ of the substantive (*ag bheith* ‘being’!) and counts the nasalisation of *f*- in *ní bhfuilim* etc. (see fn. 19) as ‘aspiration’. Environments in which ‘eclipsis’ occurs are then given (p. 10), with a brief definition of that change, followed by a ‘Table of Eclipsed and Eclipsing Letters’ (p. 11). <g> is not given here, but *t*-prothesis on <s> is. The example *do’n g-cailín* is interesting. The double-letters which ‘supply the place of Eclipsis’ (<cc>, <ff> for <bhf>, <pp> and <tt>) are briefly given, as are ‘Immutable Consonants Doubled’ (medial and final <ll>, <nn> and <rr>). The guide concludes with ‘Immutables and Mutables Joined Together’ (<ln> in *colna*, <dl> in *codladh*, <dn> in *céadna* and <ng> in *ngar*). Of the latter, Connellan writes that it ‘has a nasal sound, like *ng* in English; as *ngar* (*ngar*) *near*, which is to be pronounced as much in one syllable as possible’.

One notices that the guide grows less detailed as it goes on, but Connellan was evidently content with his treatment of Irish spelling and pronunciation on this occasion, for it is adopted wholesale with only minor modifications into his 1844 *Practical Grammar of the Irish Language*.¹⁰⁵ One imagines from the context and the level of detail that, like Scurry’s *Cheithre Soleirseadha*, this was a work for the classroom.

*1835 Laoithe Chruit Ársa na hÉireann*¹⁰⁶

It is doubtful whether this evangelical production of thirty-four new pious songs composed to traditional Irish melodies ever found many readers. After a glossary (pp. 49–52), we are treated to an alphabet (eighteen letters, the Irish characters capital and lower case presented parallel to the English characters, with <h> given last) (p. 52) and ‘Contractions’ (p. 53). The ‘Mutable Consonants’ are discussed in less than half a page (p. 53). Noteworthy is the distinction between the pronunciation of slender <bh> (‘sounds like *v*’) and broad <bh> (English <w>), while <mh> always ‘sounds like *v*’. <ch> is said to sound ‘like *ch*’, but no further details are given. The ‘Eclipses’ (including as now familiar *t*- before *s*-) take up less

¹⁰⁵ *A Practical Grammar of the Irish Language*, by Owen Connellan. Dublin: Published by B. Geraghty, 11, Anglesea-street, 1844.

¹⁰⁶ *Laoithe Chruit ársa na hÉireann, do mhic agus d’inghiona thire na ran, re D. O. M. ‘Eirin mo mhuirín’*. London: Printed by Robson, Levey, and Franklin, 46, St Martin’s Lane, 1835.

than half of p. 54, but no indication is given of how to pronounce them. In concluding it is noted that <cc> is pronounced like <g>, <pp> like and <tt> like <d>. It is surprising to see the return of <pp> at such a late date: it is first met with in this context in Daniel's 1658 guide, then in the New Testament Alphabet of 1818, in Thady Connellan's guide of 1819 and in Owen Connellan's Gospel of John in 1830. On this occasion again we are dealing with a Protestant text.

1836 Townley's efforts

The synoptic life of Christ in Munster Irish produced by the Limerick-based Rev. Charles Gostling Townley (1781–1856) in 1836¹⁰⁷ begins with a preface that sets out the contents of the work, followed by remarks on dialect differences (p. 2). On the spelling of the 'preter tenses and passive particles' (the past tense passive) we are told that they are spelt to reflect the Munster pronunciation (*múineag* or *múineach* for *múineadh*). The Connacht forms of some words are given to illustrate dialect differences further (*neithibh* for Munster *neithe*, *ndeárnadh* for *ndeárnathas*). The following remark is interesting for the information it provides us on how it was hoped such a work would be used: 'Other variations, as occurring in different provinces, the careful reader will attend to, and accommodate himself to the ordinary pronunciation of his hearers.' After a prayer before reading the Bible (in Irish and English) on p. 3, half a page is made up of 'Directions for reading Irish', which consists of an alphabet in Irish characters over their equivalent in English, and then an alphabetical list of lenited and nasalised letters (<bh> broad, <bh> slender, <bf>, <bp>, <cc>, etc.). Slender <bh> (and <mh>) 'sounds like v', broad <bh> (and <mh>) 'like w'. <ch> is 'guttural, as in *loch*'; slender <dh> 'sounds like y', while broad <dh> is 'guttural'. Noteworthy is the inclusion of <df> (pronounced like <d>) and <mf> (pronounced like <m>) in this list. Contractions are given in a single line at the end.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ *Beatha ar dTiarna Iosa Criosd, do réir chómh-aontúghadh na Gceithre Soisgeul, a gCanmhúin Chóige Múmhaín: le craobhsgaoileadh, nó míniúghadh na Scriptoríridhe Naomhtha, A slighe Gairid So-thuigsiona, Déanta go fírinneach; agus le mian chum maitheasa mhuíntire na hÉirionn. Second Edition, stereotyped, 1836. Dublin: Printed by P. Dixon Hardy, Cecilia-Street. Sold at Robertson's, Grafton-Street; Ledger's George's-street and No. 2, Thomas-street, Limerick; G. Ridings, Cork; Ward & Co., 27 Paternoster-row, London.*

¹⁰⁸ Townley's productions, like those of Thady Connellan, are often complex and it is difficult to separate one item from another or to determine with certainty the exact shape of individual items. There may be other items of relevance among his productions.

Townley is probably the author of the more detailed two-page ‘Directions for reading Irish’ printed at the end of an undated Religious Tract Society publication, *Gadúighe a’ fághail bháis, agus Slanathoir a’ fághail bháis*, a translation of Richard Knill’s *A Dying Thief and a Dying Saviour*. The ‘Directions’ are subdivided into six sections, each of which has its own rhyming mnemonic. The first section gives the ‘Capital and Small Letters’ in Irish type and their English equivalent with the lines ‘The letters are not hard to tell / If *r* and *s* are master’d well’. Under ‘Contractions’, we have some of the more usual abbreviations with the couplet ‘This mark [the *sed*-symbol] for *cht*, pray mind / And all the rest you’ll easy find’. On vowels: ‘Let *a*, *o*, *u*, a broad sound take, / But *e* and *i*, you’ll slender make’. The ‘Long Accent’ is explained: ‘The *Sheena fada*, where ’tis found, / Will greatly lengthen out the sound’. Short/long pairs are then contrasted: *bas/bás*, *beith/béith* (historically *bé*), *min/mín*, *mo/mó* and *dubh/dúbhach* (where the long vowel of the former is historically the result of compensatory lengthening). The guide is interrupted by the Lord’s Prayer but continues with ‘Aspirated Letters’: ‘All Consonants, but three alone / Take Aspirates, and change the tone’ (a footnote names <l>, <n> and <r> as the three consonants that resist aspiration). The aspirated consonants are listed with some guide on pronunciation (see above). All of these are in initial position; no comment is made on medial or final lenited consonants. Townley then turns to ‘Eclipsing Letters’: ‘The term Eclipse will plainly shew, / What work these letters have to do’. The ‘eclipsing letters’ are listed like the ‘aspirates’ (<mf> and <tf> in *m’fear* and *t’fear* respectively are listed). In a footnote, the explanation is expanded: ‘In all these instances, the first letter eclipses the following one, and so deprives it of its sound as if it were altogether omitted’. This rule does not hold, however, for <cc> or <tt>, which Townley gives, and indeed perhaps for this reason he includes ‘cc like g’ in the footnote.

Who was Townley writing these directions for? He may have hoped that those distributing the tracts would provide a brief course in Irish literacy based on his guide, so that native speakers literate in English would have enough help in the directions to be in a position to read aloud to their neighbours. Superficial as his mnemonics were, they represent an effort to make the material as attractive and memorable as possible.

1837 *Dánta Diaga*

This book of Protestant hymns translated into Irish by Mícheál Ó Conaill of Millstreet, Co. Cork,¹⁰⁹ like *Laoithe Chruit Ársa na hÉireann*, probably attracted few readers. The address to the reader begins:

These Hymns are adapted to the Munster Vernacular Dialect for the sake of those who have a slight knowledge of reading, I have digressed a little from the orthography of the Language, with the desire of making it by that means more easily read and understood. But as the reader goes on he will find it approaching nearer the regular form until towards the end, it altogether takes it up. (p. [5])

The guide itself is presented on the back-cover (the first time I have noticed such a placement). There we read that there are nine consonants which can combine with <h> ('aspiration') and so change sound. <bh> and <mh> 'represent v or w', <ch> 'has a guttural sound, <dh> and <gh> sound like English <y>, etc. A footnote states that these last two are silent in the middle and end of words. Eight 'Eclipses' are mentioned, in which a letter is prefixed to another, the second losing its sound. In a footnote we are told that <ng> is pronounced as in English 'king'. Finally the use of the accent to mark length is noted with the minimal pair *bas/bás*, which might have been suggested by O'Reilly's *Sanas*, where we find the same pair (p. 2) or Townley's 'Directions' published with the *Gaduiḡhe* (discussed above) or it might have been arrived at entirely independently. (It is found again in 1842; see ### below.) Beyond that remark there is no comment whatsoever on the vowels.

1839 Tuam Catechism

This monolingual catechism prepared for the Catholic archdiocese of Tuam includes two pages of English-language 'Directions for reading the Irish Language' at the end (pp. 77–8).¹¹⁰ They are probably the work of Martin Loftus, who became professor of Irish in Maynooth in 1820 (Tynan 1985: 85–6). The alphabet is given – first all in upper-case, then all in lower-case. The vowels are listed. As a 'General Rule', we are told that '[t]he vowels are short, except when marked with an accent, or followed by an aspirated consonant and other letter or letters in the end of word'. The minimal pair *sal* 'filth' and *sál* 'heel' is given,

¹⁰⁹ *Dánta diaga, aistrithe o Hags-bhéurla go Gaodhailge, agus tuille cumtha gcanmhúin Mhúimhin, le Micháel Ó Cunnuill, Sráid-a-mhuillin a gconthao Chorcuide. [Ps 149:1]. Cork: Printed by W. Morton, 36, Prince's-street, 1837.*

¹¹⁰ *An Teagasg Críosdaighe, de réir chomhairle Ard Easboig Thuama, agus Easbog na Cúige sin. [Mc 10:14]. A m-Baile Atha-Cliath: Clóbhuailte le T. Coldamhell, 1839.*

and 2 sing. imperative *figh* (short) is compared with *dlighe* and *slighe* (long). ‘This rule has exceptions.’ The diphthongs are given and those that are always long are listed. ‘The rest short, unless marked with the accent.’

Aspiration is then explained under that heading. The sounds of the various aspirated letters are given. <bh> ‘sounds as v or w, as *mo bhord*’, a vague formulation. <ch> ‘sounds as *gh* in *lough*, as formerly pronounced in Ireland, as *mo chos*’. <dh> and <gh> ‘sound generally as Y consonant in the beginning and middle of a word’ but ‘[i]n the end of a word it is scarcely ever sounded’ (p. 78). <mh>, like <bh>, ‘sounds as v or w’.

Beneath the heading ‘Eclipsis’, we encounter the definition: ‘that is, a letter may be placed before them which renders them entirely quiescent, except in the instance of the letter *g*’ and a table illustrates the changes (including *t*-prothesis)’. A footnote on *ng*- gives the familiar instruction, ‘This sound must be learned; there is none like it in the English Language’.

These rules, concise but clearly written, would be disimproved in the later edition (see ### below).

1842 *Carad an Chríosdaigh*¹¹¹

This is a basic devotional booklet prepared by Jonathan Furlong, a Catholic priest born in Limerick but based in Kilrush, Co. Clare.¹¹² Though printed in roman type, lenition is indicated by means of a dot over consonants. It concludes with ‘Rules for Reading’ (pp. 205–8), written in a simple and repetitious style. It begins:

The vowels are a, e, i, o, and u.

The vowels a, o, and u, are said to be broad vowels.

The vowels, e, and i, are said to be slender.

¹¹¹ [first titlepage] *The Christian’s Friend; containing certain prayers necessary for the discharge of the service of God. By Jonathan Furlong, Catholic Priest. [Mt 7:7]. Dublin: Sold by the booksellers, 1842.*

[main title facing frontispiece] *Carad an Chríosdaigh; no leabharán ionna bhfuil urnuighthe áirighthe riachtanach chum seirbhís dhiadha do chomhlíonadh. Le Ionatan Furlong, Sagart Catoilice. [Mt 7:7]. Dublin: Sold by all booksellers, 1842.*

¹¹² For Furlong, see Ní Dheá 2003.

All the vowels are pronounced short, unless they are accented, in which case they are pronounced long; as *bas*, the palm of the hand; *bás*, death. (p. 205)

There follows ‘Rules for the Asperated Letters’. Furlong does not use <h> as a mark of lenition, so his definition of ‘Asperation’ – which does not affect <l>, <n> or <r> – explains it as the change of sound that occurs when a consonant is dotted (pp. 205–6). The rules for individual ‘asperated’ consonants are vague. Similar to the instructions in the Tuam Catechism, dotted and <m> are said to ‘have the sound of v or w’ and examples are given (*a bhean*, *leabhar*, *a mhian*, *domhan*) but without any indication of whether the pronunciation /v/ or /w/ is a case of free variation or depends on position or consonant quality. Dotted <c>, <g> and <d> are treated together: ‘in the beginning of a word, when followed by a broad vowel, [they] have the rough guttural sound of gh in the English word *lough*; (as generally pronounced in Ireland;)’ (p. 206), a common comparison in the case of <ch> (also met with in Tuam). Initial slender dotted <c> is said to assume ‘a sound resembling that of h in the English word *hear*’ (p. 207), while initial slender dotted <g> and <d> are given the usual English equivalent (<y>). Medial and final broad dotted <c> retains ‘its rough guttural sound’, but medial and final <gh> and <dh> are silent (as in *modh* and *righ*). We note that palatal medial and final dotted <c> is not discussed.

On eclipsis, Furlong has the advantage of his own orthographical convention to simplify matters somewhat:

When a letter is set before the first letter of a word, and the little mark (-) called a hyphen set between them, the first letter of such words is said to be Eclipsed, because it is not sounded at all, but instead of it, the letter that goes before the hyphen is that which is sounded; thus, a *g-cosa*, their feet, is sounded as if it were written, a *gosa*; and so on for all such forms of words.

This concludes the guide. We can compare Donlevy and Scurry’s use of capitalisation to clarify this issue with Furlong’s hyphen. There is some slight ambiguity here, as Furlong also uses the hyphen to separate a vowel from h-prothesis (e.g. *na h-imdhearg mé*, p. 129). He also does not explain the *n*-stroke of which he makes liberal use.

1843 M’Sweeny

Conor M’Sweeny was a native of Passage West. His *Songs of the Irish* appeared in six numbers in 1843, beginning in April (p. 48) and ending in September (p. 49). He informs us

(in a note written at the top of the sole extant copy) that the first number was written at Inverness, December 1842. M'Sweeny was a passionate nationalist-minded defender of the Irish language and, like John O'Daly (see next item), sought to make Irish literature (in M'Sweeny's case, specifically folk-songs) available at the price of one penny per number. Though the book was primarily intended, it seems, for native Irish-speakers and learners, much of it was clearly written with an eye to other readerships, in particular scholars of language and 'the English critic' (p. 11). The notes to the songs are mainly etymological and comparative: in the first number, for example, M'Sweeny connects the 'termination' *-dóir* in Irish *spealadóir* to Spanish *-dor*, and analyses *tascana* as the English loanword *tasc* with a native plural suffix, proceeding then to a discussion of plural suffixes with references to Persian, Greek, Sanskrit, Hebrew, Punic,¹¹³ English and French (pp. 5–6). Dialect forms and pronunciation are sometimes adverted to (such as Munster *machnamh* for *machnadh*, p. 7), but besides explanations of literary and historical allusions, M'Sweeny's primary concern in the commentary was demonstrating the significance of the Irish language for linguistic scholars. He himself noted towards the end of the first number:

The department of "comparative philology" might be greatly extended, if time and other circumstances permitted; the examples here given are supplied from memory alone; it does not properly belong to the work, but I am anxious to shew that scholars have, in the Irish language, a rich subject of research, if they will but avail themselves of it. (p. 8)

At the end of the second number, M'Sweeny published an 'Irish Alphabet with the several powers of the letters' for 'those who may wish to teach themselves Irish' (pp. 13–16). The Irish letter is given in Irish type with advice on pronunciation: '*a* pronounced like *a* in *far*', '*b* pronounced like *b*'. M'Sweeny – a stickler for detail and a severe self-critic¹¹⁴ – strove to be accurate and comprehensive while still providing practical guidance to the reader reliant on these rules, though the result is often confusing, as when he writes:

¹¹³ M'Sweeny rejects Betham's theory – expressed in his *Etruria Celtica* (London), published in the same year, though M'Sweeny does not name the publication – that Irish was to be connected with the Punic language. The idea was not new. Vallancey had proposed this identification in his 1772 *Essay on the Antiquity of the Irish Language* (Dublin).

¹¹⁴ The sole extant copy of M'Sweeny's *Songs* is the heavily annotated authorial copy owned by Whitley Stokes. Apparently, M'Sweeny himself arranged for copies to be gathered up and destroyed. He was clearly dissatisfied with errors and textual uncertainties in his editions. For M'Sweeny, see Ó Drisceoil 2006.

bh pronounced *v*; often silent between vowels, and when occurring in combination with another consonant, but it is to be observed that silent letters influence the sound of the preceding vowel. Its true sound is, I apprehend, that of the Spanish *b*, viz. initial *w* in English.

Similarly, he notes that <ch> is pronounced gutturally but also ‘like *h* between vowels’ and that it is sometimes silent (in the indicative and secondary future endings, for example). Such formulations must have been difficult to digest. In the latter case at least he provides clearer guidance: ‘it will be safe to follow the general rule of pronouncing it like *gh* or *h*’. His observation that <d> (non-mutated), <l>, <n> and <t> are pronounced ‘with the tongue full against the teeth’ is a good first effort at bringing out a detail of Irish pronunciation which does not normally find a place in guides of this type. M’Sweeny distinguishes between slender and broad *s* by means of the following vowel but without introducing a distinction between these categories – an entirely defensible pedagogical decision.

Etymological speculation intrudes again when M’Sweeny observes that all vowels were originally short as long vowels are specifically marked long (p. 14). He explains the pronunciation of ‘combinations of vowels’ in the same way as the basic alphabet and lenited consonants. M’Sweeny highlights older spellings on occasion, observing that <aoi> (‘pronounced like *ee*’) is <ai> ‘in old works’. Some of the orthographical distinctions M’Sweeny draws are probably illusory. He distinguished between <aoi> and <aóí>, the latter ‘pronounced like *ay-i*’, as in *faóiseamh*; while M’Sweeny would certainly have been in a position to know how the word *faoiseamh* was realised by speakers of Munster Irish, the use of <aóí> to indicate /e:/ with broad onset and palatal offset is otherwise unknown to me. <ea> (‘pronounced like *a* in *far* nearly, and in old works *e*, as *ealt*, a flock, herd’) is accidentally given as <ae> in the sequence. M’Sweeny rejects the spelling <eu> for <éa>, hinting that the former represented a different pronunciation. Some misunderstanding is evident in his discussion of *leán* ‘sorrow’ and *ceás* ‘to torment’ (p. 15): M’Sweeny advocates pronouncing them as *léan* and *céas* respectively, but this is their proper spelling in any event. <eo> and <eó> are clearly distinguished, but no distinction of length is made with <iu>. M’Sweeny also distinguishes between <ua> (‘pronounced *oo-a*, as *duadh*’) and <uá> (‘pronounced *o* long, as *nuádh*, new; *uá*, son’) – this is simply an attempt to accommodate the Munster pronunciation of <ua> in certain words with the conventions of the spelling system. M’Sweeny has two pronunciations for <úi>, but here he confuses a long *u* with palatal offset

(*súil*) and what would now normally be spelt <aoi> (*muíne*, i.e. *maoine*); he decides to mark the former with a grave accent and the latter with an acute (p. 16).

Perhaps to ameliorate the difficulty of reading <dh> and <gh>, the discussion of ‘vowel combinations’ also includes information on the pronunciation of <aidhe>, <oidhe>, <aighe> and <oighe> (all ‘like *ee*’). Here M’Sweeney carefully notes that the presence or absence of an accent may alter the pronunciation, by which he presumably means that *óighe*, for example, is not to be pronounced the same as the <oighe> of *snoighe* etc. M’Sweeney concludes this section with the observation that Irish has no silent vowels at the ends of words, lacks the combinations <au>, <ie>, <oa>, <oe> and <ou> and double vowels.

His ‘Instructions’ come to an end with ‘Combinations of consonants’, by which he means initial mutations other than lenition indicated by two graphs: <bp>, <bf>, <cc>/<gc>, <ff>, <dt>/<tt>, <ts>, <ng>, <nd>, <nn>, and <pp>. He then remarks ‘When one word begins with any of these combinations, take away the first letter, and you have the true one’, where ‘true one’ means ‘radical consonant’. On <nn> he remarks that it ‘has a peculiar influence on the vowel before it, lengthening its sound’, the only allusion to middle quantity in the first iteration of his ‘Instructions’. He concludes: ‘I do not think it necessary to trouble the reader with many other particulars. *Usus te plura docebit.*’

M’Sweeney returned to these brief rules in the fifth number of his *Songs* with ‘Instructions in Irish continued’ (pp. 33–40). This supplement begins with a long discussion of the rule *leathan le leathan, caol le caol* (pp. 33–6). Though he allows exceptions in compounds – his justification being that assimilation does not occur when an adjective is attributive (e.g. *crobh mhín*) and so need not occur when a noun and adjective are compounded (e.g. *crobh mhín*) – M’Sweeney argues at length for the validity of the rule against Bishop O’Brien (‘author of a very interesting, though scanty, dictionary of the Irish language’) (see ### above).

Following this discussion, he re-visits ‘Vocal Sounds’ (p. 36), his intention being ‘to give the reader a more precise idea or knowledge of the vocal sounds of our language than perhaps he has been able to collect from No. II’. Though this discussion marks an improvement in some points of detail, it is less streamlined in presentation. In many cases M’Sweeney provides more common-place items of vocabulary as examples than on his first outing as an explicator of Irish orthography and phonology. The most significant difference in his treatment of vowels on this occasion related to middle quantity. Under ‘Single vowels,

short' <a> now has two pronunciations: 'like *a* in *far*' but also like *ao* 'in one sound' when followed by *-ll*, *-mm*, *-nn* (e.g. *ball* 'pronounced *baool*'). (The examples suggest that this change is restricted to monosyllables, though this is not made explicit.) He does not neglect to note that a following vowel cancels this lengthening, so that the pronunciation of the vowel in *clann* and *clanna* is distinct. M'Sweeney also notes that <o> 'is pronounced like *o* in *word*, as *borb* proud, *gorm* blue'. Middle quantity is not mentioned in connection with any other 'short' vowels, but under 'Single vowels, long' we find *ard* and *bard* spelt *árd* and *bárd* ('pronounced like *a* in *war*'), and *binn* is given under <í>. Though not a comprehensive treatment of middle quantity, the revised discussion is certainly an improvement in detail on the simple short/long opposition of his initial foray into the genre of 'Brief rules'.

The discussion headed 'Combinations of vowels' (pp. 37–40) is an inchoate attempt to identify the core of the vowel in the case of 'diphthongs', a term which here still covers both true diphthongs and simple long vowels indicated in writing by means of a sequence of vowel-graphs. Treating of the palatal glide in *óir*, M'Sweeney writes 'The sound of *i* is insinuated rapidly between *o* and *r*, it seems not to be there yet it is'. He notes that in *áir*, 'the broad vowel is chiefly sounded', but in *suím* 'the slender vowel is the prevailing sound'. He corrects his earlier error regarding <úi>, now distinguishing between <úi> and <uí>. He introduces <ae> ('always long' and described as 'a rare combination'), and at a later point <ea>, which had been mis-spelt as <ae> in No. II, is printed correctly ('pronounced short, like *ea* in *heart*'). Middle quantity rears its head again (though not by that name) in the discussion of <ai>, where we are told that *baill* is 'pronounced *bweel*'; M'Sweeney defends this pronunciation as historical and wonders about how best to represent it in spelling, proposing <aì>. M'Sweeney flirts with reforming the spelling system by eliminating 'silent' letters, asking rhetorically why the awkward spelling *ballaidhe* for *ballaí* is preferred. He returns again to the two realisations of <aoi> and proposes now to distinguish between <aoi> (as in *claoín*) and <ae> (as in *faoiseamh*). <eu> is admitted again, but he urges that a final decision be made as to whether <éa> or <eu> should be used 'either being unnecessary while we have the other'. Short <iu> (as in '*tiumh*, fast, thick') is now distinguished from long <iú> ('as *liú*, a cry'). The pronunciation of <ua> as [o:], which M'Sweeney indicates with <uá>, is now 'a manifest anomaly', and he proposes spelling it <ó> or <uó>, 'possessive [i.e. genitive] and plural *uoí* and *uí*', that is, when palatalised this <ua> (in *ua* 'descendant', for example) becomes <uoí> or <uí>.

M'Sweeny concludes this revised discussion of vowels with an admirable attempt to describe the schwa:

N.B. When *ai*, *ei*, *oi*, *ui*, stand by themselves in a monosyllable, they have the sounds respectively assigned to them; but in a dissyllable or trisyllable, when not accented, they have an obscure sound resembling *i* short. The same is to be said of *ea*, in words ending in *eamh*.

M'Sweeny concludes with 'one or two general observations on the consonants' (p. 40), which are worth quoting in full:

That *d*, *t*, *l*, *n*, are pronounced with the tongue full against the teeth. This is always true of *d* and *t*, but not always of *l* and *n*; and the cases in which they are uttered with the tongue against the roof of the mouth as in English, are generally these – when they occur in the end of the same syllable with *d* or *t* initial, in which case the repercussion of the tongue against the teeth would have a disagreeable effect. For example, in the word *dána*, *bold*, the *n* is pronounced with the tongue against the roof of the mouth, to avoid the repetition of the same movement after *d*, as also in the word *tanaidhe*, *thin*, and *l* in *talla*, *a hall*, for the same reason. Also when they come in combination with *m*, as in *calma*, *anm* [*sic*], *brave*, *the soul*.

M'Sweeny only draws attention to a distinction between palatalised and non-palatalised consonants in the case of <s>; nonetheless it seems safe to assume that the above lines means that both palatalised and non-palatalised /d/ and /t/ were produced by pressing the tongue against the upper teeth and neither were of the 'alveolar (or English type)' (cf. Ó Cuív 1944: 34–5). If his account of the articulation of the tongue is accurate in the case of /l/ and /n/, it seems more likely that the tongue was slightly raised following /a/ than because of proximity to initial /t/ or /d/.

These 'Instructions' and the following supplement have a rather haphazard feel.¹¹⁵ M'Sweeny was learning on the job and improving rapidly: though the early numbers are undated, their author informs us that the first instalment appeared in April 1843 and No. V was published before August of that year. With a good ear and an eye for detail, M'Sweeny

¹¹⁵ M'Sweeny's discussion of 'silent letters' in the sixth number of his *Songs* (pp. 45–8), in which he takes issue again with one of Bishop O'Brien's pronouncements, is not relevant for our purposes: it is a comparative and etymological treatise rather than a practical guide to reading Irish and is not presented as a continuation of his 'Instructions'.

might have produced a guide at once more comprehensive and more digestible had he taken heed of pre-existing guides like that by Scurry, but as they are the ‘Instructions’ show no obvious indebtedness to any of his predecessors. By the time he came to publish his *Self-Instruction in Irish* the following year (only one part appeared), which covered much the same ground, the presentation was far more satisfactory and the treatment was more clearly focused on the needs of one particular group of readers.¹¹⁶

1844 O’Daly¹¹⁷

Seán Ó Dálaigh’s ‘Introduction to the Irish Language’ in his *Reliques of Jacobite Poetry* (pp. iii–viii) is extracted from Mac Curtin’s Grammar with only minor changes, and as a result seems old-fashioned judged against the shorter manuals and the more linguistically-oriented introductions that had appeared in the meantime.¹¹⁸ The letters and letter-names are given in *An Chéad Chaibidiol* (as in Mac Curtin) along with some observations on the Irish alphabet, the letters <k>, <q>, <w>, <y> and <z>, and the concept of ‘mutables’ and ‘immutables’ is introduced. In discussing the individual mutable consonants, however, Daly is prepared to make slight changes to Mac Curtin’s text. Where Mac Curtin compares lenited *b* or *m* to Latin *v*, noting that the latter ‘sounds much smooth, and lower’ than the former, O’Daly treats them separately, uses English *v* as the pronunciation of <bh> and supplies his own (often livelier) examples, while of <mh> he writes that ‘it pronounces like *V*, or somewhat broader, like *W*, in the English language’ (p. iv). O’Daly omits all of Mac Curtin’s discussion of lenited and unlenited *l*, *n* and *r*, the reduction of <ll> and <nn> to <l> and <n> in syncope, as well as the consonant-classes of bardic poetry (see above).

His second chapter departs further from Mac Curtin. O’Daly equates ‘Influences’ with ‘Eclipses’, whereas Mac Curtin gives other types of ‘Influences’ (which his chapter heading makes clear refer to the influence of consonants on one another), of which ‘Eclipsis’ is but one sort. Whereas Mac Curtin has eight consonants that suffer eclipsis and gives them in

¹¹⁶ *Self-Instruction in Irish, (Part I.) consisting of exercises in spelling and pronunciation, chiefly designed for the youth of Ireland. By Conor M’Sweeny. Clanna Mílídh! Dublin: Printed for the Compiler, by Goodwin, Son and Nethercott, and sold by Geraghty, 12, Anglesea-street; Warren, 8, Tighe-street; and may be had, by order, of all booksellers, 1844.*

¹¹⁷ *Reliques of Irish Jacobite Poetry: with Metrical Translations by Edward Walsh. Biographical sketches of the authors and interlinear literal translations by John O’Daly. | [epigram from Denis Mahony the Blind] | Kilkenny: John O’Daly, Rose-Inn-Street, 1844.*

¹¹⁸ For Ó Dálaigh, see Ó Drisceoil 2007.

tabular form, Daly gives the number as seven – though he treats of all eight repetitiously pointing out that it is the first letter that ‘carries the force’ in each instance – and abandons the tabular format (pp. v–vi). He winds back to treat of the assimilation of <ln> (dealt with in Mac Curtin’s chapter) and writes, ‘Thus ends a true and full description of all the consonants, both single and double, plain, and aspirated’. Despite this ‘Finit’ O’Daly continues on the topic, giving the letters that are never aspirated and classifying the double-consonants as *teann* (a category which also included <ng> and <m> in Mac Curtin, as in bardic grammar).

No heading separate the vowels from the consonants, though Mac Curtin treats of them in a separate chapter. Nonetheless the dependence on Mac Curtin remains heavy here despite some abridgement and re-arrangement. Where Mac Curtin has ‘Here the learner is to understand the power of the long accent over any single vowel, or Diphthong short of Nature, and the same accent is to be observed in all such syllables as it governs’ (p. 22), Daly has ‘The learner must observe, that the vowels are always of a short quantity when without an *accent* or *long stroke*, thus (´) set over them, but when this stroke is placed over a vowel in any syllable, it gives it a long sound’ (p. vi). His definitions of ‘diphthongs’ and ‘triphthongs’ are borrowed from Mac Curtin, and he gives their traditional groupings and their English renderings, and the two quatrains beg. *Cheithre hamharchoill riomhthar ann* and *E, a dtúis gach Eabhadha áin* as in Mac Curtin, but O’Daly provides additional information on pronunciation lacking in Mac Curtin. Interestingly, having stated that <ao> ‘sounds like *e* in the English language’, he declares of <ae> that it is ‘pronounced as it comes’ (p. vii). Of <eo> and <ua> he writes that one ‘pronounces both together in the word’, an observation which is not particularly helpful. He neglects to give an example of short <iu> and, indeed, appears not to recognise it (p. viii). After paraphrasing a note from Mac Curtin on the use of the length-mark, he gives ‘Examples of long and short sounds’, the point of which it is difficult to detect, before writing that ‘Diphthongs and Triphthongs shall never be divided’, condemning *pi-an* for *pian*. The introduction concludes with the claim ‘By a careful perusal of this short Introduction, the learner will be able to use any Irish book with ease’.

In a scathing review in *Dolman’s Magazine* II (1846), 201–2, which took exception to the anti-English sentiment so obvious in O’Daly’s work, doubt is cast on the utility of this guide: ‘Perhaps we are not apt scholars; for certainly we never learned any language with the facility here promised’. It could be objected that by ‘learner’ O’Daly may have meant not so much an *ab initio* learner of Irish but an Irish-speaker coming to the reading of Irish for the first time. But O’Daly clearly had a very wide readership in mind: his *Reliques* appeared in

numbers sold for a penny (he specifically mentions the ‘Irish peasantry’ in his preface, p. ii) with word-for-word interlinear translations and more literary renderings, and it is clear that he hoped to expand the readership of Irish and to make Irish literature more widely available. Though the review in *Dolman’s Magazine* comes from a hostile quarter, the criticism has some validity: O’Daly might have selected a more easily digestible guide in such a context and there were more suitable models for him to choose from. His next effort was more successful.

1858 O’Daly again

In 1858, O’Daly published his own revised edition of the poems of Tadhg Gaelach with some bardic poems and more modern verse.¹¹⁹ Once again O’Daly’s readership is the Irish ‘peasantry’, but it seems the book was targeted primarily at Irish-speakers:

In consequence of the numerous errors with which all former editions abounded, a new edition of a book so popular as the present was quite indispensable; and in order to place a correct version in the hands of the peasantry, to whom, in Munster particularly, its contents are as familiar as household words, we have undertaken the task. (p. v)

Defending his use of roman type, he declares ‘every peasant who speaks Irish and reads English can master the work in its present form’.

At the bottom of p. viii of his introduction, O’Daly prints ‘Directions for reading this book’. In a few lines, he goes through 14 letter-combinations and one simple letter that might give pause to an Irish-speaker literate in English but not Irish: <ae> (‘sounds like *e* in the word *they*’), <ao> (‘sounds like *ay* in the words *say*, *bay*, *hay*’), <aoi> (‘sounds like *ee* in the words *see*, *thee*’), <iui>, <eo> (which is treated as if only long), <bh> (‘sounds like *v*’), <ch> (no distinction is made between broad and slender), <dh> (‘sounds like *y* in the words *young*, *yet*’), <fh> (‘no sound’), <gh> (‘sounds like *y* in the words *youth*, *yew*’), <mh> (‘sounds like *w* before broad vowels’ and ‘like *v* after slender vowels’), <ph> (‘like *f*’), <sh>, <s> (‘sounds before *e* and *i* like *sh* in *ship*, *sheep*’), and <th>. The spelling of the edition is semi-phonetic following Denn, which was an advantage to O’Daly, and while this short guide has some strange omissions (broad <dh> and <gh>, for example) and inconsistencies (why are different

¹¹⁹ Timothy O’Sullivan’s (*Commonly Called Tadhg Gaelach*) *Pious Miscellany; containing also a collection of Poems on Religious Subjects*, by Ængus O’Daly the Divine, Tadhg Mac Daire Mac Brody, John Hore; together with Patrick Denn’s Appendix. Edited by John O’Daly. Dublin: John O’Daly, 9, Anglesea-Street, 1858.

examples given for the pronunciation of <dh> and <gh>?) it was eminently more suitable than his first effort fourteen years earlier.

*1858 Munster New Testament*¹²⁰

The brief preface by Robert Keane, of Rahona Lodge, Carrigaholt, Co. Clare, dated 10 October 1858, sets out the goal of this publication. The existing Irish translation of Old and New Testaments ‘is admitted by competent judges to be a reasonably faithful and good one’. The translations of William Daniel and William Bedell are those meant. The preface continues:

This has been in use for many years, and few doubt its adequacy to meet the wants of the Irish-speaking population. [. . .] The existing translation of the Irish Testament has not only a number of original words, but endless inflections of words, not understood by the peasantry in the South and part of the West of Ireland,—such words being in the dialect spoken in the Province of Connaught two hundred years ago,—and the altering continually of such words, whenever I read the Irish Scriptures, and substituting others of the Munster dialect, gradually led me to the thought, which I had not at first conceived, of going systematically through the whole of the New Testament, with the help of a competent Irish writer, who was thoroughly acquainted with the language as spoken in the South of Ireland; and this resulted in the production of the present version.

His competent ‘writer’ is nowhere named. The idea that the Irish Bible reflected Connacht Irish may derive from the statement in the Irish version of the epistle to the reader in the 1602 New Testament that parts of the text were printed *ar chosdus Chóigidh Chonnachd, re linn Shior Risdeard Bingem do bheith na uachdarán innte*, ‘at the expense of the Province of Connacht, while Sir Richard Bingham was president there’. Comparison with the 1602 NT version reveals that the revision is mostly cosmetic (e.g. *ribh* > *libh*, 2 pl. imperative *-aidh* > *-igídhe* etc.) with occasional slight re-wording (e.g. *air fásach* > *a bhfásach*, *ríoghachd Dé* > *ríoghachd na bhflathas*).

¹²⁰ *Tiomna Nuadh ár dTighearna agus ár Slánuightheóra Íosa Críost: do tarraingíoch roime-seo go firinneach as an nGréigis go Gaodhailge Conachdach; agus anois atá aisdrighthe do réir na Gréigise céadna go Gaodhailge Chúige-Múmhan: le Riobeárd Ó Catháin ó Chóntae Chlár. Baile-Átha Cliath: Hodges, Smith, *7c.; Lúnduin: air na dhíol le Samuel Bagster agus a mhic, an bhliadhain d’aois ár dTighearna 1858.*

A small slip is pasted at the front: ‘Any person who speaks the Irish language and has ever learned to read English, can read this book with ease, if he will for a few minutes study and observe the corresponding letters in the following alphabet’; only three lenited letters are included: <bh> is equated with <v>, <dh> with <y>, and <mh> with <w>. The claim is hardly to be taken seriously.

1862 Tuam Catechism again

The 1862 edition of the Tuam Catechism,¹²¹ edited by Ulick Bourke, Professor of Irish (and other subjects) at St. Jarlath’s College, as revealed by a note in David Comyn’s copy (NLI AA14756), has a number of footnotes, some of which give information on pronunciation. The first footnote (p. 1), for instance, on the word *maidne*, notes the assimilation of *dn* to *n*, comparing *céadna* and *cind*. The second notes the assimilation of *dl* to *ll* in *codladh* (‘pronounced *colloo*’). Other notes, however, are purely etymological, such as the derivation of *míniughadh* from *mín* (p. 20 n. 1).

The two-page guide to reading Irish at the back (pp. 77–8) is a slight re-working of that in the earlier edition (see ### above) but introduces inaccuracies. The statement that vowels are short unless otherwise marked long is replaced with the statement that they are long when so marked or ‘generally when followed by the aspirated consonants’, as in *dlighe*, *fighe* and *righ* (historical *rí*). Final <dh> and <gh>, which in the earlier version, are ‘scarcely ever sounded’ at the end of a word here lengthen the preceding vowel (this is untrue in words like *modh*). While the statement that <fh> is ‘not entirely quiescent’ is accurate enough, at least in the accompanying example (*dam féin*, where *féin* is pronounced with initial /h/), it seems excessive on the part of the reviser to clutter up such a brief guide with marginal cases. The ‘revisions’ occasionally introduce contradictions. The sound of <ng> has no parallel in English (a statement retained from the earlier edition) but is also heard at the end of words like ‘song’ and ‘ring’!

*1863 O’Reilly Catechism*¹²²

¹²¹ *An Teagasg Críostaighe, do réir Chomhairle Ard-Easboig Tuama agus Easbog na Cúige sin. Buailte go nuadh ó bhuan-chló. A m-Baile Atha-Cliath: Clobhuailte le C. M. Mharrean, 21 Oir-mhumhan Calaidh Uachdar, 1862.*

The Christian Doctrine, compiled according to the resolution of the Archbishop of Tuam, and the bishops of that province. Dublin: Published by C. M. Warren, 21, Upper Ormond Quay, 1862.

This edition printed one of the Munster versions of the ‘O’Reilly Catechism’ for the Keating Society. In the preface, reference is made to ‘flourishing Irish classes’ in Maynooth and ‘some of the public schools in these dioceses’ (p. iv). The hope is expressed ‘that, apart from its primary use as a manual of Christian doctrine, it will be found a useful class-book in the hands of the many thousands, who, throughout the province, are now learning to read and write the olden tongue’ (p. v). The catechism was printed twice in 1863 – once in Irish characters and once in the standard Roman characters.

Seven pages of ‘Short Instructions for the Use of Beginners’, mature and well-written, precede the catechism (pp. i–vii). They are signed ‘WW’, that is, William Williams of Dungarvan, who compiled this edition. They begin:

It will not be necessary for the young learner to commit these explanations to memory; but he should read them over a few times *carefully*, so as to understand them thoroughly, with a view to refer to them afterwards whenever any difficulty should occur to him in reading the catechism. By a little application, he will have the satisfaction to find himself, *in a few weeks*, able to go without any assistance, and to read not only the catechism, but every other Irish book he may happen to take up. (p. i)

The eighteen ‘characters’ of the Irish alphabet are given. ‘These are formed very like the English letters, except *r, s, t, r, s, t*: the learner should first make himself acquainted with these letters, so as to be able to know all the characters at a glance.’ (In the version of the catechism printed without Irish characters, this last comment is omitted.) The pagination remains the same by having the first page of the instructions begin somewhat lower down the page in that version.

The vowels are given and subdivided into broad and slender and the remaining characters are said to be consonants, except <h>. Under the heading ‘Sounds of the Vowels’, he notes that the five vowels can be both long and short, and a table gives a guide to their pronunciation (‘*á* long’ is said to sound like ‘*a* in *call*’, etc.). Under ‘Sounds of the Diphthongs’, he defines a ‘diphthong’ gives the thirteen vocalic digraphs, divided into their

¹²² *An Teagasg Críostuidhe, agus na gnáth-úrnaighthe; nuadh-scríobhtha agus léir-cheartuighthe, le Fuirionn Dhochtuir Céitín, re hAonta Aird-Easpuig Caisil agus Imligh, agus na nEaspog uile Chúigidh Mumhan. Cuireadh an leabhar so i m-buan chló le Seon F. Fobhlaeir, Ninteoir, Reaceadóir, agus Leabhar-Cheanaidhe i mBaile Atha Cliath, A. T. 1863.*

traditional groupings by a semicolon but without further comment: <ae>, <ai>, <ao>; <ea>, <ei>, <eo>, <eu>; <ia>, <io>, <iu>; <oi>, <ua>, <iu>; <oi>; <ua>, <ui>. ‘Of these, <ae>, <ao>, <eu>, <ia>, <ua>, and generally <eo>, are always long’ (p. ii). A table illustrates their sounds. Interestingly, long <aí> as in *aímsir*, which in some dialects has vocalic middle quantity, is given as long with the sound ‘oi in *toil*’. Similarly, <eí> is said to be long, as in *greím* (p. iii). Short <eo> is mentioned here. <oí> occurs in *croídhe* (the first vowel to be pronounced like ‘uee in queen’), which is also the pronunciation of <uí> in *buidhe*. No recommended pronunciation is given under ‘Sounds of the Triphthongs’ (p. iii).

Beneath ‘Sounds of the Consonants’, we are informed that the consonants are pronounced like English but ‘have a *thicker* sound’, and they are both broad and slender (p. iv). ‘It may be well to observe, once for all, that the slender sound of s is *always* the same as that of *sh* in English.’ The immutable consonants are given, so called ‘as they never change from their radical sounds’. The remaining consonants are treated under ‘Table of the Aspirated Consonants’ (pp. iv–vi). Here the mutable consonants are entered separately according to their position and whether they are broad or slender: so <bh> and <mh> ‘broad, com. and end, sounds like v’ but ‘*bh*, *mh*, broad, mid., sounds like u or w’, while <bh> and <mh> ‘slender, com. and end, sounds like v’ but medially ‘generally silent’. It is added that there are ‘some slight shades of difference between the sounds of *bh* and *mh*, which it is unnecessary to here point out’. Broad and slender <ch> are distinguished and ‘slender’ <ch> is pronounced like <h> medially and finally (as in *fiche* or *deich*). Initial broad <dh> and <gh> sounds ‘like a thick y’, but these are silent medially; the slender varieties sound like English <y> initially, but are silent internally and finally (as in *buidhe*). In noting compensatory lengthening, the issue of ‘silent’ <dh> and <gh> is simplified.

‘Eclipsis of Consonants’ takes up the rest of the guide proper. ‘Eclipsis’ is defined and examples of pronunciation given, followed by a table illustrating the pronunciation on the various relevant letters (including as usual *t*-prothesis on initial *s*-) (p. vii).

The guide concludes:

It would swell the size of the Catechism beyond the proper limits to extend these instructions any further; even the little here offered, if well understood, and followed out, will enable every boy and girl in the province, in a very short time, to read their native language, the language in which Patrick, Columkille, Brigid, and countless

thousands of other saints prayed, and instructed our forefathers, and which, perhaps, before all other living tongues, would be appropriately called the language of prayer.

General observations

In the above survey, I have attempted to highlight some points of intrinsic interest for historical dialectology and the history of the Irish grammatical tradition in these guides. It has already been remarked several times that it is unclear how effective these guides were or, indeed, could be. Each must be judged according to its intended readership. The detailed, linguistically-oriented survey provided by Scurry for the ‘scholar’ in 1820 cannot be judged by the same yardstick as the brief one-page guide found on the back of the paper wrapper of a slim volume of protestant hymns in 1837. The authors or adaptors of shorter guides may have had different ideas of what was truly essential than we do.

The success or lack of success of a given guide depended too on the skill of the author or adaptor of the manual. Though a native speaker, Stapleton clearly lacked the necessary training and pedagogical insight to provide a reliable or useful guide for his illiterate fellow Irish-speakers; he found no imitators. Richardson on the other hand was influential. When pre-existing guides were re-published or revised, whether associated with the same text or not, the new context and the manner of revision had a role to play in whether the manual would prove effective or not. Thady Connellan (1819) and John O’Daly (1844) reproduced with slight modifications long passages of earlier grammars as guides to reading Irish, though their exemplars were unfit for purpose in their new context, while Ulick Bourke (1862) managed to disimprove the lucid, accurate and concise guide first appended to the Tuam Catechism with extraneous and inaccurate additions of his own.

After 1680, manuals in Irish disappear. Already the monolingual 1680 *Graimmeir* – only the second monolingual guide to reading Irish and destined to be the last – shows the influence of Daniel’s ‘Brief and Plain Rules’ of 1652 and offers explanations that rely on a knowledge of English. The usefulness of a metalanguage in such guides is obvious. Daniel also influenced Richardson’s manual of 1712, the guide which probably did the most to shape the ‘brief rules’ paratextual genre. In fact, after the very first manual (1571), the focus shifts to the needs of English-speakers and Irish-speakers literate in another language, the 1680 *Graimmeir* being an outlier; after Stapleton (1637), who wrote for an audience literate in Latin, the other language is always English.

A certain number of key difficulties had already been recognised as early as 1652 and picked up by Richardson. The enduring influence of Richardson (and through him Daniel) is a testament to the effectiveness of his guide. Whether expounded at great length or treated concisely on a single page, issues such as the pronunciation of <gh> and <dh> inevitably come to the fore in these guides. In detail the treatment of particular issues changes – sometimes in response to dialect, sometimes to considerations of space or simplicity or comprehensiveness – but the challenges of conveying Irish phonology in English remain the same throughout this period and barring certain refinements and local modifications little could be done to improve on Richardson. Written guides could only convey so much. It is no doubt because of the limitations of the written word that the treatment of vowel-graphs is often so patchy, when their pronunciation is treated at all. While phonetic spelling systems such as that offered by Denn could ameliorate some difficulties, a written guide to Irish could never capture all the sounds of the language, particularly as the more phonetic spelling systems were either simplified versions of the existing Irish spelling system or adaptations of the English spelling system.

The debt owed to the native bardic grammatical tradition is obvious in these guides, but they also represent a departure from the inherited framework of grammatical scholarship. The very first guides that provide a broad account of Irish pronunciation as it relates to spelling – those of Ó Kearnaigh, Stapleton and Daniel – are produced by individuals who did not belong to bardic families. Ó Kearnaigh had obviously received some instruction in the bardic grammatical tradition – and advocated others to do likewise – but Daniel’s grasp on the native terminology is less secure and Stapleton is ignorant of even the most basic terms. Nonetheless, particularly through Daniel – who was also trained in Latin, Greek and Hebrew – and Mac Curtin – who plundered an earlier grammar broadly in the bardic mould – certain native grammatical terms trickled through. O’Scurry was well-versed in contemporary linguistics, but he found a place also for bardic categories. The perennial letter-names, though not a feature of every guide, are a feature of many of them and of larger grammars. Even with the aid of bardic terminology and concepts borrowed from English, Latin or Hebrew grammar, the want of terminology is noticeable. For example, the difficulty of expressing orthographic vowel-variation in unstressed syllables was mentioned several times in the chronological survey above – a difficulty incidentally which disappears from such guides as more standardised spelling is adopted.¹²³ A fuller history of Irish grammatical writing would

¹²³ Plunket in 1791 is the last to mention it, so far as I have noticed.

require a detailed treatment of large-scale grammars, but these short manuals have a place in such a history.

It has already been stressed that to assess each individual guide properly one must have regard for the context of its publication. In turn, these guides can shed light on the motivations behind and the intended readership of discrete publications. An important case in point is Ó Kearnaigh's 1571 Catechism, for which a classroom-context has been proposed for the first time based on a closer reading of the associated manual to reading Irish than hitherto undertaken. Closer attention to such paratextual aids can become a key to providing a fuller account of the books in which such manuals are published. Just as the first authors of these guides were 'non-traditional' grammarians, instructions on how to read Irish bear witness to attempts to expand the readership of Irish beyond the traditional literate circles of scribes and school-masters in Irish-speaking areas. While the Protestant books containing such guides likely received little attention because the books themselves struggled to find readers, some of these short guides may well have helped individuals who were native-speakers of Irish and could read English to read their catechism in their native language or indeed the poems of Tadhg Gaelach. On the other hand, the presence of a guide to reading Irish for the curious monoglot English-speaker in 1795 and in Patrick Lynch's 1810 *Life of Patrick* suggests that these guides were often included pro forma. The guide to printing Irish was an established feature of Irish publishing by this time and the lack of thought and conception in some guides implies that they were often included simply for the sake of including them, because other books had them, because it was expected. The existence of so many examples of brief rules to reading Irish associated with Irish-language texts is a reflection of the socio-linguistic conditions in the period surveyed (a greater level of literacy in English in Ireland, even among Irish-speakers, for example), but it is also a product of a particular printing tradition, which – on Irish soil at least – began with a guide to reading Irish.

The story of guides to reading Irish is a complicated one and a reminder of the usefulness of a discursive bibliography of Irish printing. These brief rules are rarely noted in catalogues if they are not announced on the title-page, and it is possible that some have been overlooked here, particularly in cases where we have not been able to examine a particular book ourselves. While the survey attempted here may not be complete, it is hoped that it will contribute to a fuller history of grammar-writing in Irish and that it may provide a basis of comparison with the printed traditions of other languages.

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